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FIFTY YEARS WITH JOHN COMPANY

*From the Letters of
General Sir John Low of Clatto, Fife*

1822–1858

By URSULA LOW

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

Made and Printed in Great Britain by Butler & Tanner Ltd., Frome and London

DEDICATION
TO
MY FATHER
WILLIAM MALCOLM LOW, I.C.S..
(1835-1923)
WHOSE RESEARCHES INTO FAMILY
HISTORY PREPARED THE WARP AND
WEFT FOR THE WEAVING

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FOREWORD

THERE has come into my possession a collection of letters written between 1822 and 1839 by my great-grandmother, Mrs. Robert Low, to her son John in India, which were found after his death—at the great age of ninety-one—at the family home in Fife. During this period, voluminous notes, amounting often to complete copies, were kept by him of his home correspondence and, after his final retirement, were bound together in a thick, silver-clasped album.

The period of his service—1805–58—was an interesting and critical one on India.¹ Of it Professor G. N. Trevelyan writes :

A new sense of the security of our rule in the East, together with the fullness of the Company's money chest, led to progressive improvements in the methods of the British Raj.

The noble traditions of the Indian Civil Service were created by public servants like Sir Charles Metcalfe & the Scots sent out in such numbers by Dundas. Though still owing their original appointments to a system of personal favour & political patronage, they were already of a very different type from the parasites & adventurers through whom & against whom Clive & Warren Hastings so often had to work. . . .

The British were entering into the third period of their relations with the East. A hundred & fifty years of quiet

¹ *British History in the 19th Century* (Chap. xx, "From the Napoleonic Wars to the Mutiny").

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trading had been followed by fifty years of conquest, not unaccompanied by plunder. The third period of organized rule for the benefit of the Indians had now fully set in.

Although there are many gaps in this interchange of letters, enough remain to give a peculiarly intimate glimpse into this Scotch family circle of a century ago, both at home and in India.

In those days family affection had to be of a strong and enduring quality to survive the long separation and dearth of communication entailed by an Indian career.

The mails were carried by the Company's magnificent fleet of Indiamen,—armed vessels of 1,200 to 1,500 tons, in all respects resembling His Majesty's ships of war (there was in fact a somewhat bitter rivalry between them), but as the voyage to Calcutta took from four to six months, a year frequently elapsed before the answer to a letter could be received. To a young man in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the embarkation in one of those splendid ships was a serious business indeed, although the fact that he was sailing to an unknown land from which, more probably than not, he would never return, is not likely to have damped the spirits of buoyant youth, and the risk of encounter with a French Privateer lent a spice of excitement to the long and monotonous voyage.

Born in December, 1788, and educated at the University of St. Andrews, John Low sailed in 1804, at the age of sixteen, as an Ensign in the Madras Army.

Before he left home, a lad three years older than himself, David Wilkie, son of the Minister of a neighbouring parish, was commissioned to

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come over and paint,¹ for the sum of five pounds apiece, three portraits—of John himself—of his next sister, and the man she was about to marry.

The first is the most pleasing of the three, and depicts a slender boy, with an expression at once wistful and resolute, dressed in a blue coat and frilled shirt, a bunch of seals dangling below the short buff-coloured waistcoat. Against a murky background, a burst of gun-fire indicates his future profession.

His sister Catherine, who was eighteen and the beauty of the family, was married shortly before his departure. The ceremony took place in the drawing-room, after which, clad in a scarlet riding-habit, she rode off with her husband, accompanied, strangely enough, by her young brother, apparently in the capacity of *chaperon*! The honeymoon was spent at Loch Leven, where John subsequently narrowly escaped drowning, the couple being on that occasion distantly, and no doubt pleasurabley occupied.

At the time that this correspondence opens (no earlier letters have survived) he had already been away from home for eighteen years, and twenty more were to elapse before destiny permitted him to revisit his native land, for time after time the longed-for date had to be postponed.

The earlier part of his career gave him much varied service in the field. He was attached to the 59th Foot (now the 2nd East Lancashire Regiment) in the Java expedition against the

¹ In 1804 Wilkie painted a series of portraits, the proceeds of which enabled him to go to London and start work in the schools of the Royal Academy.

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Dutch in 1811, and was blown up and temporarily disabled at the storming of Fort Cornelis.

In 1812-13 he served as Persian Interpreter and Head of the Intelligence Staff to Colonel Dowse in the 3rd Mahratta campaign, and in 1816 was in Commissariat Charge of Baron Tuyl's force sent against the Guntur rebels, while as extra aide-de-camp to Sir John Malcolm,¹ he took part in the battle of Maheidpore in December, 1817.

From the moment that John Low came under the notice of that great soldier-administrator, his future was assured, and their relationship was thenceforth marked by an unfailing kindly interest and appreciation on one side, and on the other by a boundless admiration and affection.

The following year saw him employed as First Political Assistant to Malcolm, and, incredible as it may seem, with only the rank of Lieutenant, dispatched at the head of a force of three thousand men and ten guns, to pacify the Chindwara district, and he was later entrusted with the difficult task of inducing the Peishwar, Badjee Rao, to place himself under British protection.

The vacillating character of the latter, who was kept in a state of perpetual terror by the intrigues of his Court, was graphically described by my grandfather in his report to his Chief, and it appears to have required an almost superhuman patience, coupled with stern resolution, to bring the negotiations to a successful conclusion.

In 1819 he was placed in charge of the sur-

¹ Sir John Malcolm, Indian soldier and administrator (1769-1833). He came of a remarkable family. His father was a small farmer in Dumfriesshire, all of whose sons had distinguished careers.

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rendered Peishwar as Resident at Bithur, a castle near Cawnpore. Incidentally the latter's adopted son, the notorious Nana Sahib, was destined to play a sinister rôle in a later chapter of Indian history !

From that time onwards John Low's services were entirely in the political line. From Bithur he was sent, as Resident, to Jaipur, and subsequently to Gwalior and Lucknow, which latter appointment he held for eleven years. The earlier period of his career in the political line was a very lonely one. In those days the position of British Agent at the smaller native Courts was one of extreme isolation and entailed being cut off from all European society. It must have been during these years that he gained that insight into the native mind, which caused John Kaye (in his *History of the Sepoy War*) to speak of him in the Mutiny days as :

The Nestor of the Political Service, a veteran without a stain ; no man had so large an acquaintance with the Native Courts of India ; no man knew the temper of the people better than John Low.

He could see with their eyes & speak with their tongues & read with their understanding.

With his marriage in 1829 a new era set in for him, and his later letters abound with references to his young wife's relations, who were representatives of the third generation—on both sides of the family—destined to serve the East India Company.

The appearance in 1931 of a book setting forth the history of my grandmother's family—*John Shakespear of Shadwell and His Descendants, 1619-1931*, by Lieut.-Colonel John Shakespear,

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C.I.E., D.S.O.¹ (in which the writer expresses himself indebted to my father for some of his material)—proved a mine of information, not only regarding those members of it who figure in the letters, but their immediate forbears, whose lives were interwoven with earlier developments in the scope and activities of John Company, and whose careers brought them into close and friendly contact with Warren Hastings.

Some of these earlier records are therefore included in these pages, as giving a typical picture of the “va et vient” of successive generations between this country and India—in which, as is fitting, the ladies take their place.

After 1839 no sequence of letters between John Low and his family was preserved, but there remained at Clatto, the Fife home, a quantity of other correspondence, both from personal friends and from those with whom he was officially associated.

During the last years of his service—1848–58—while acting as Governor-General’s Agent in Rajputana, as Resident at the Court of the Nizam, and after his final transference to Calcutta as Military Member of the Supreme Council, many of these letters, in particular the private ones received from Lord Dalhousie and Lord Canning, not only refer to the momentous events then taking place in India, but contain frequent allusions to his own personal life and activities, thus finding a fitting place in these garnered records, which contain, as a connecting link, the story of one man’s pilgrimage.

¹ Printed for private circulation by the Northumberland Press.

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My thanks are specially due to Colonel J. Shakespear for his invariably kind help and sympathy, also to Mrs. Davidson, granddaughter of Susan Foulis, for the many items of family information with which she has supplied me.

URSULA LOW.

* * * * *

The appended tables are given, in addition to the data supplied in the footnotes, for the use of such readers as are chronologically minded.

January 1936.

TABLE I (LOW)

(The names of children who died in infancy are not included.)

Robert Low, merchant of Dunfermline, m. in 1743 Katherine, d. of John Stobie, of Wester Luscar.

<i>1st Generation</i>	<i>2nd Generation</i>	<i>3rd Generation</i> (No issue.)
Robert Low of Clatto (only surviving child), m. in 1782 Susanna Elizabeth Malcolm. (See Table II.)	1. Charlotte, 1784-1862, wife of (1) Samuel Charteris Somerville, W.S., and (2) John Mill.	
	2. Katherine, 1786-1873, wife of Col. Alexander Deas, of Hilton.	1. William Deas, 1806-43 (Madras Lt. Cavalry), m. and left one d. 2. Catherine Deas, 1809-55. 3. Alexander Deas, 1811-42 (5th Native Infantry), killed at Kabul. 4. Robert Deas. B. 1813, died young.
	3. John (Gen. Sir John Low, K.C.B., G.C.S.I.), 1788-1880, m. Augusta Shakespear. (See Table III.)	1. Charlotte Herbert, 1833-53, m. Sir Theophilus Metcalfe. Died after the birth of her son, Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bt., 1853-1928. 2. William Malcolm Low, 1835-1923 (Bengal C. Service). 3. Robert (Gen. Sir R. Low, G.C.B.), 1838-1911. 4. John Alwes Low, 1840-1932 (R.H.A.). 5. Irvine Low, 1841-81 (Major Bengal Cavalry). 6. Augusta, 1844-1921. 7. Selina, 1845-1927.

TABLE I—*continued*

<i>1st Generation</i>	<i>2nd Generation</i>	<i>3rd Generation</i>
	4. William Low, 1792–1874 (Col. Madras Army). M. (1) Margaret, d. of Alexander Gibson Hunter, of Blackness, and (2) Thomasina Agnes, d. of Sir James Foulis, Bt., of Colinton.	(No issue.) (A son and daughter.)
	5. Susanna, 1793–1865, wife of Gen. Sir David Foulis, of Cairnie Lodge.	1. Archibald Foulis, 1813–53 (Madras H.A.). 2. David Foulis, 1814–55 (Madras Medical Service). 3. Robert Foulis, of Cairnie Lodge, 1821–96. 4. John George Foulis, 1827–9.
	6. Maria, 1794–1886, wife of Gen. Alexander Bethune of Blebo.	1. Susan, 1821–1900, wife of David Gillespie, of Mountquhanie. 2. Margaret, 1823–99, m. (1) George Paton, Senator of the College of Justice, and (2) Major Malcolm Paton. 3. Alexander Bethune of Blebo, 1824–1900 (42nd Highlanders). 4. Robert Bethune, 1827–1904 (Major Gordon Highlanders).
	7. Georgina Mowbray, b. 1786, died c. 1863.	
	8. Henry Malcolm Low, 1798–1858. (Died at Meadi Pegu.)	

TABLE II (MALCOLM)

Dr. John Malcolm, Senior Surgeon 1st Royals, m., c. 1756, Anne Gould.

<i>1st Generation</i>	<i>2nd Generation</i>
1. John McColme, or Malcolm, 1758-1822 (Major E. I. Co.'s Service), m. Eleanor Todd.	1. Robert Malcolm, M.D., of Edinburgh. 2. James Fryer Malcolm, R.N. 3. John Malcolm, M.D. (Three daughters.)
2. Robert Malcolm, 1765-96, 27th Regiment (Inniskillings). Killed at the taking of St. Lucia.	
3. Susanna Elizabeth, 1760-1843, wife of Robert Low. (See Table I.)	
4. Charlotte, m. in 1782 Major Lloyd Hill (1st Guards). Died in 1841.	Susan, her only surviving child (b. before 1794), died in 1823.
5. Maria, m. in 1787 William (afterwards Sir William Fettes, Bt.). Died in 1836.	William Fettes (Advocate). Died in Berlin, <i>aet.</i> 27, in 1815.

TABLE III (SHAKESPEAR)

John Shakespear (Writer in the Bengal Service), m. in 1782 at Laycock, Mary, d. of the Rev. W. Davenport and Martha Talbot, of Laycock Abbey.

<i>1st Generation</i>	<i>2nd Generation</i>
1. John Talbot Shakespear, 1783–1825 (Bengal C. Service), m. in 1803 Amelia (Emily) Thackeray. (See Table IV.)	1. Emily, 1804–87, wife of William Fleming Dick, Bengal C. Service. 2. John Dowdeswell Shakespear, 1806–67 (Bengal Artillery), long in the Political Service. 3. William Makepeace Shakespear, 1807–35 (Bengal Artillery). 4. Augusta Ludlow, 1809–93, wife of Gen. Sir John Low. (See Table I.) 5. George Trant Shakespear (Bengal C. Service), 1810–44. 6. Sir Richmond Campbell Shakespear, C.B. (Bengal Artillery), 1812–61. 7. Charlotte, 1813–49, wife of J. H. Crawford, Bengal C. Service. 8. Marianne, 1816–91, wife of Colonel Archibald Irvine, Bengal Engineers. 9. Selina, 1820–1908.
2. William Oliver Shakespear, 1784–1838 (Madras Civil Service), m. Leonora Charlotte, d. of Charles Maxtone, M.C.S.	(Eight children.)
3. Henry Davenport Shakespear, 1786–1838 (Bengal C. Service), m. Caroline, d. of B. Muirson, Esq.	(Thirteen children.)
4. Arthur Shakespear, 1789–1845 (entered the Army as a cornet in the 2nd Dragoon Guards. Later transferred to the 3rd Dragoon Guards and the 18th and 10th Hussars, in which last regiment he fought at Waterloo), m. Harriet, d. of Thomas Skip-Dyot-Bucknall, Esq.	(Seven children.)
5. Mary Anne, 1793–1850, wife of the Rev. Francis Thackeray. (See Table IV.)	

TABLE IV (THACKERAY)

William Makepeace Thackeray (Writer in the E.I. Co's. Service), m. in 1776 at Calcutta, Amelia, d. of Lt.-Col. Richmond Webb.

<i>1st Generation</i>	<i>2nd Generation</i>
1. William Thackeray, 1778-1823 (Member of the Madras Council). Died of fever, at sea.	
2. Amelia (always known as Emily), 1780-1824, wife of John Talbot Shakespear. (See Table III.)	
3. Richmond Thackeray, 1781-1816 (Bengal C. Service), m. Anne Becher.	William Makepeace Thackeray (the novelist), 1811-63.
4. Augusta, 1785-1849, wife of (1) John Elliot, B.C.S., and (2) Dr. F. Halliday. (Died in Paris.)	No issue.
5. Charlotte, 1786-1854, wife of John Ritchie. (Died in Paris.)	1. William Ritchie, 1817-62 (Advocate-General of Bengal), m. Augusta Trimmer and left eight children. His third son, Richmond (afterwards Sir Richmond Ritchie), married his cousin, the elder daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray. 2. John Ritchie (Ensign Bengal Army). Died in 1847, <i>æt.</i> 23. Three daughters.
6. Webb Thackeray, 1788-1807 (Madras C. Service). Died of fever.	
7. Thomas Thackeray, 1789-1814 (Lt. Bengal Army). Killed in action.	
8. St. John Thackeray, 1791-1824 (Madras C. Service). Killed in action.	
9. Rev. Francis Thackeray, 1793-1842, m. Mary Anne Shakespeare. (See Table III.)	Four children, one of whom died in infancy. (The younger son was Sir Edward Talbot Thackeray, V.C., 1837-1927.)
10. Charles Thackeray, 1794-1846 (Barrister of the Inner Temple.) Died at Calcutta.	
11. Sarah Jane Henrietta, 1797-1847, wife of Robert Langslow, Attorney-General in Malta and afterwards in Ceylon.	Two sons.

CHAPTER I

Letters to St. Helena, 1822-1823

JOHN LOW had been for three years acting as Resident at Bithur in charge of the surrendered Peishwar, when in 1822 a complete break-down in health made it necessary for him to leave India for the Cape, from whence, under medical advice, he took ship for St. Helena. He left his post with great reluctance, and it appears, from a letter written some years later to his mother, that the relations between this native prince and himself were on a very friendly footing.

It refers to a commission entrusted to her before his departure.

I find that I have never mentioned the kaleidoscope. It did not reach Badjee Rao's hand for four years, but I at last had an opportunity of delivering it to him myself, & he was much pleased, not so much at the thing in itself, for he had already seen one, but he is very much attached to me, & finding that my mother even turned her thoughts to him in his downfall was most gratifying, he said to his feelings.

He even shed tears, & when taking leave of me he again alluded to it, saying that he had received such kindness from me as he could never forget, & that he prayed the Supreme Being to make me a *Bramin*¹ in the next change in *this world*, & that I should in due time be absorbed in the Deity !!

¹ The spelling of the original letters retained throughout.

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John's sojourn in the island of St. Helena seems to have been melancholy.

He was suffering from an illness in which both lungs and liver were affected, the much-lauded climate proved disappointing, and to crown all, he was for long entirely without news, either from India, where at this time he had a brother and a married sister, or from Scotland, his correspondence having been chasing him round the globe.

This was a real deprivation to a sick and lonely man, whose affections were deeply rooted in the home of his boyhood. Devoted to both his parents, it is evident that the mother's influence had been the moulding force of his life, and her simple homely letters entirely fulfilled their purpose of keeping him in close and intimate touch with the home circle, whose quiet lives were mainly passed in the "Kingdom of Fife" and in Edinburgh.

St. Helena was however a regular port of call, and he himself was sending letters home by every available ship. Under date of August 2nd in his letter-book stands the following quaint reflexion :

Don't know whether I may address the letter to her [his mother] or to my father. It is of no consequence, for I can conscientiously say that I hardly know which of the two possesses the greatest share of my respect & affection.

The various accounts I have had from different Indians who have visited Clatto, added to my own recollections, combine to make me truly proud of them both.

Pecuniary matters were worrying him at the time. His father, a kind-hearted, generous man, was in money difficulties, and he determined to send £200 a year to his parents.

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I could without inconvenience send much more money when I return to my station. Can do nothing here owing to the heavy expenses I am subject to, & the deduction of my salary till I return to Bithoor.

The 16th October proved to be a joyful day. The *Henry Poucher* called in with mails from India, bringing a letter from his sister.

At last had the satisfaction to receive a letter from Susan, particularly acceptable as it gives good accounts of the family, both in India & Europe.

Have been without intelligence for fifteen months from home & from India for eight.

On the 16th November he mentions in a letter to his father that

. . . it has been the wettest season that has ever been known on this island during the recollection of the oldest man.

It was well for the tragic prisoner at Longwood that he had made his final escape in May of the preceding year. It is curious that Napoleon's name is not once mentioned in John Low's notes, but a slender volume which stood on the Clatto bookshelves with his name on the fly-leaf—*Manuscrit Venu de St. Hélène D'une Manière Inconnue*¹—must have come into his possession at this time.

The next letter home announces his intention of returning to the Cape, chiefly on account of the difficulty of taking exercise.

This island, with the exception of a few fields at Longwood, which is five miles from town, is a collection of

¹ Published by John Murray in 1817. (It purported to emanate from the pen of the Emperor himself.)

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steep hills separated from each other by deep ravines, & the summits being all narrow ridges or high peaks, it is impossible to move without either going up hill or down hill, or along the irregular side of a hill.

Meanwhile the weekly letters from his mother, which he had specially asked for during his stay in the island, were beginning to arrive.

The country homes and "town houses" therein described have long since passed into other hands, but in the chit-chat of these old, beautifully legible letters, their former inmates once more take form and life.

With a deeply affectionate and generous nature, Susan Elizabeth Low had more than a touch of native shrewdness, and allowing for a certain partiality in favour of her own brood, brought an excellent judgment to bear in her estimate of human nature. Her simple but profound piety was free from any tinge of Calvinistic gloom, and she possessed that never-failing sense of humour which springs from a grasp of the true essentials of life.

She was the daughter of John McColme, long in the army as Senior Surgeon to the 2nd Battalion, 1st Royals, with commission dated 1744. He was with the regiment for some years in America, and after his retirement settled in the town of Ayr, where he practised as a physician.

His wife was an Irishwoman, whom he had married in Dublin, where the regiment had been quartered before crossing the Atlantic, and her grandson remembered her as a very witty and well-instructed old lady. John McColme's father, who came of an Ayrshire family, was for some years Minister of Duddingston, Midlothian. He was a

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noted philologist and Erse scholar, and it is evident that his learned pursuits meant more to him than his cure, for in 1742 he was deposed for deserting his charge for two years without leave, most of which time had been spent in London.¹

John McColme had a family of two sons and three daughters, and in their school days his boys came into contact with a poor, but ambitious lad, avid of learning. In his autobiographical letter to Dr. Moore, Robert Burns wrote :

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me—I formed several connections with other *youngsters*, who possessed superior advantages. . . . My young superiors never insulted the *clouterly* appearance of my ploughboy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemency of the seasons. . . .

They would lend me stray books—& one, whose heart I am sure not even the “Munny Begum” scenes have tainted, even helped me to a little French.²

In his notes, Gilbert Burns states that it was through their school teacher that his brother procured :

the notice of some families, particularly that of Dr. Malcolm, where a knowledge of French was a recommendation. . . . There were the two sons of Dr. Malcolm, the eldest, a very worthy young man, went to the East Indies. . . .

He is the person whose heart my brother says the “Munny Begum” scenes could not corrupt.

To the children of this brother, who retired on his marriage from the Company’s service and settled

¹ Account of the Rev. David McColme, D.D., in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. At the period of this correspondence the living was held by the well-known Scotch painter, the Rev. John Thomson.

² Given in Dr. Currie’s edition of Burns’ works.

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at Haughton-le-Skerne, Yorkshire, S. E. Low's letters constantly refer.

Her other brother, Robert McColm (or Malcolm as the name was now usually spelt), of the 27th Regiment—(Inniskillens)—was killed at the taking of St. Lucia in 1796. He was known in the regiment as " Fighting Bob," from the number of duels that he engaged in. Susan Elizabeth, the eldest of the three daughters, was born in 1760, the year of George the Third's accession. Their father died in 1781, and in the following year the second daughter, Charlotte, was married at St. Martins-in-the-Field to Captain Lloyd Hill¹ of the 1st Foot Guards, and Susan Elizabeth was herself married a few months later at the same church to Captain Robert Low, and given away by her brother-in-law. Maria, the youngest, did not marry until 1787. Her husband was William Fettes,² known to posterity by his legacy to the Scotch nation—Fettes College, Edinburgh, who at that time was busily engaged in accumulating a large fortune as a contractor for military stores. To her two sisters S. E. Low was very tenderly attached.

Charlotte Hill had lost her husband in 1793 from fever contracted on foreign service, when serving as Brigade Major to the Guards Battalion under the command of the Duke of York. She was now

¹ Captain Hill also held the appointment of Fort Major in the Tower of London, obtained on the recommendation of the Duke of York. The salary was small—under £200 per annum, but the " profits are stated as being much more considerable " (*Gentleman's Magazine for 1793*).

² William, son of W. Fettes, Merchant, and Margaret, daughter of James Rae, of Edinburgh, Surgeon. Created a Baronet in 1804, and retired from business in 1800, giving up his time to the management of various landed estates which he had purchased.

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living in Edinburgh with her only daughter Susan, her other children having died in infancy.

Like her sister, Maria Fettes, she appears to have been in a perpetual condition of “petite santé.”

The tragedy of the Fettes household was the loss of their only son, an Advocate, who died in 1815 in Berlin, at the age of twenty-seven.

Susan Elizabeth enjoyed robust health. Her husband, who was fourteen years her senior, had been destined for the Law, but disliking an office stool in Edinburgh, he sailed for India, and served as an officer in the Madras Army from 1771 to 1782, when he retired and acquired Clatto by purchase, where the couple brought up a large, cheerful and very good-looking family of three sons and five daughters. To the mother, devoted as she was to all her children, it is clear that John, the eldest surviving son (two boys had died in infancy), was the apple of her eye. The second, William, entered the Royal Navy in early boyhood, but subsequently, like John, sailed for India at the age of sixteen, as an ensign in the Madras Army. A close and life-long affection united these two brothers. Henry, the third son—the youngest member of the family—was at this time twenty-four years old, and a gay and debonair young W.S. in Edinburgh.

The eldest daughter was the wife of Samuel Charteris Somerville, also a Writer to the Signet, who was living at Lowood, on the banks of the Tweed, opposite to the Pavilion, the fishing lodge of his kinsman, Lord Somerville, Sir Walter Scott's old “crony,” to whom he was acting as factor.

Charlotte Low had married into what would nowadays be called a *brainy* family. Her hus-

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band was the younger son of the old Minister of Jedburgh,¹ described by Scott as "one of the oldest of the "Literary Brotherhood," and her brother-in-law, a man of much ability, who had had an adventurous early career in South Africa as a member of Sir James Craig's Mission to the Cape in 1793, was now living in London as one of the Principal Inspectors of the Army Medical Board.

Doctor William Somerville was however eclipsed by the brilliancy of his wife, who as a scientific writer was a star of the first magnitude. He had married his first cousin, Mary, daughter of Vice-Admiral Sir William Fairfax, and widow of Captain S. Greig, described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* as being "the most remarkable woman of her generation," which description is hardly surprising when one learns that her last work, *Molecular and Microscopic Science*, was published in her eighty-ninth year!

Catherine, John's favourite sister, had now been long a widow, her husband, Colonel Alexander Deas, a retired officer of the Madras Army, having died in 1814. His property, the small estate of Hilton, Fife, was up for sale and she and her four children had recently migrated to Edinburgh.

Susan, the third daughter, was in India with her husband, Colonel David Foulis, who had already seen much service with the Madras Army, having fought, among other campaigns, against Tippu Sahib at the fall of Seringapatam. He had bought Cairnie Lodge, a property which marched with

¹ Thomas Somerville, D.D., 1740-1830, author of *The Reign of Queen Anne*, and other historical works. His autobiographical reminiscences, *My own Life and Times*, were published posthumously in 1861.



CATHERINE LOW, WIFE OF LT.-COL. A. DEAS

From a miniature painted in 1804

LETTERS TO ST. HELENA

Hilton, in order to be near his wife's relations, and their two elder boys, aged eight and nine, were living at Clatto in the charge of their grandparents. Maria, the fourth, was the wife of Colonel Bethune of Blebo, a son-in-law to whom S. E. Low was especially devoted. He had succeeded to Blebo in right of his mother, heiress of that estate, his father having been Sir William Sharp, Bart., of Scotsraig, a lineal descendant of the unfortunate Archbishop who was murdered at Magus Muir in 1679.

During Colonel Bethune's lifetime his parents' marriage was held to be null and void, owing to a marriage previously contracted in Portugal, where Sir William had taken military service after the Forty-five when he had to flee the country, and the proving of his legitimacy by his grandson¹ is one of the romances of Scotch Law.

Georgina, the youngest girl of the Clatto family, never married, but remained her mother's constant companion. It is a curious fact that all the soldier sons-in-law were a score, or more, of years older than their wives. All the married daughters and their children paid prolonged visits to the parental home, from which Hilton and Cairnie Lodge were distant about seven miles, while Blebo was within half an hour's walk !

The first letters which reached John at St. Helena, were much concerned with the visit of George IV to Edinburgh. All Scotland was agog with excitement, and even those whose families had suffered after the Forty-five were eager to show their loyalty to the reigning dynasty.

The eldest of S. E. Low's grandsons,² a lad of

¹ The late Sir Alexander Sharp Bethune, Bart.

² William Patrick Deas, Madras Light Infantry.

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sixteen, and a very beloved member of the family circle both at home and (later) in India, was at this time at Clatto.

CLATTO, *July 28th, 1822.*

MY DEAREST JOHN,

A fortnight has nearly elapsed since we received yours. Another week & I hope in God that good accounts will come.

William Deas is here at present ; he is everything we could wish in essential matters, lively & pleasant in his manners, & genteel in his appearance.

Georgina went to Wakefield to Mr. Cleghorn's ¹ the other day. William goes to-morrow & they ride home together. The King is expected in Edin^r. the 10th August, the town is already filling with crowds to see him, even those who have seen him often.

It is said he goes to Scone, wishing I suppose to see the place where our Kings were crowned. He will probably sail in his yacht from Leith to the North Ferry, from there he will be escorted to Perthshire by a party of the Fife Yeomanry.

Henry is appointed one of the number, for he, altho a W.S. in Edin^r., is a cornet in the Fife Yeomanry, which does not put any money in his purse, but it is right & so we must submit.

Mrs. Bruce has sent us an invitation to Edin^r. which Georgina has accepted, so you may expect a description from her. She & Sir William Fettes were to set off yesterday upon an eight days' tour to Loch Lomond, to be back before the King arrives.

The Somervilles ² are to come from London, & in short the whole world, as they say, is on the move. No doubt a few old folk like us must submit to stay at home. My dearest John, I write you all this chit in hopes to amuse you, sincerely praying however that your health may be such as to make it acceptable.

It is in speculation to present the King with a St. Andrews Cross set with Scotch stones, the money to be

¹ Hugh Cleghorn, of Wakefield House, of whom more below.

² Doctor William Somerville and his wife.

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raised by subscriptions from ladies, Sir Walter Scott to present the cross, accompanied by twenty ladies, wives of the Judges, & Bart's ladies residing in Edin^r.

I don't think Lady Fettes' health will permit her to be one, but of course she will be a subscriber. Georgina is gone to Blebo to stay with Maria & to remain the week. Lord Aylmer,¹ who was formerly in the same regiment with Col. Bethune is there, likewise Lady Aylmer. He is nephew to Lord Whitworth. . . .

William Deas is extirpating the rabbits at Blebo ; he was off at 4 o'clock this morning to get at them. He is to have a licence this season & says that he will stock us with game.

Catherine was to go to Dollar yesterday, where Sir William Fettes has a property. She & Rachel Cleghorn were to sail from Leith in the Stirling steam-boat to Alloa,—the steam-boats are very quick & cheap conveyances, but I do not like to encounter the dangers of both fire & water at the same time.

Write by every post, my dearest John, we trust to your being candid as to your health, & God grant you may be enabled to give us comfort.

Your father joins me in earnest prayers for your welfare.

Ever your most affec^{te} Mother
S. E. Low.

August 6th, 1822.

MY DEAREST JOHN,

The *Fairlie* is long long of making her appearance, but if she brings good news at last how thankful and happy we shall be.

Georgina went down to Dunnikier ² with Col. Bethune & their guests, Lord & Lady Aylmer, & she & Jessy Cleghorn set off from this for Edin^r. on Thursday to be present at the King's arrival. He is to pass through Pitt St. on his way to the Abbey by the Regent Bridge, so Catherine's windows will be in great request.

Doctor Grace was mentioning that a lady of his acquaintance was to retire to the upper flat, & had let the rest of her house for eighty pounds during the King's stay, which is to be ten days.

¹ John Frederick Whitworth, First Baron Aylmer, 18th Foot (Governor-General of Canada 1831-5).

² The seat of the Oswald family.

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Here follows a lengthy passage about a parcel of medicines which she had forwarded to the Cape.

Butter milk is an excellent thing for disorders of the lungs. Doctor Mackie of Huntingdon told me that the worst case he ever saw was permanently cured by the patient living entirely on butter milk, but dearest John, don't use my nostrums without consulting your physician.

By the way, of nostrums, I have just been applying one now.

Your father was driving down a nest from an apple tree, which happened to irritate some bees that had been near it, & they flew after him & stung his legs terribly, he never mentioned it till the evening, when the pain put him really in a degree of fever.

We then applied laudanum, & afterwards a mixture in equal quantities of honey, sweet oil & vinegar, spread in a cloth & put on the place which relieved him—so much for old wives' tales.

Harvest is begun at Callange, & it is thought it will be general in ten days, a very rare occurrence in this part of the world.

All good attend you my dearest John prays
Your ever affec^{te} Mother,

S. E. Low.

If contemporary life has gained much in hygiene, convenience and a general speeding-up, many homely joys have been correspondingly lost.

The nostrums, too, were probably as efficacious as modern panaceas purchased at the chemist, and triumphant application must have afforded far more lively pleasure !

To such, S. E. Low was quite incurably addicted.

CLATTO, Aug. 23rd, 1822.
MY DEAREST JOHN,

Still no intelligence of the *Fairlie*; if she is near the Channel, here is a strong west wind to blow her up, but it is a bad wind for our King, who should be in the Firth of Forth by this time.

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What a bustle there is in Edin^r. Georgina writes me that there are fifteen hundred tailors at work day and night, and of course many mantua makers and milliners . . . Archibald and David Foulis, dear little fellows, are here for the vacation ; they are as fine boys as ever were seen. Last night they drank tea at the Manse. They are dining at Kemback to-day, which is great gaiety for them.

Sir William Fettes returned from his jaunt not very well, with a stomach complaint, but is better now and means to be at Court. The King, it seems, salutes the Ladies who are presented, and the presentations will be so numerous that I daresay he will be heartily tired. The mania for going to Edin^r. is so great that the country and country towns will be quite deserted.

The Magistrates of a great many towns have gone, among the rest Cupar,¹ in a coach and four, with scarlet liveries.

The Playfairs of St. Andrews are off in a body, and in their official capacity to wait on the King.

Principal Haldane [St. Andrews University] went to his tailor to order a new gown, but he told him if he were to give him a hundred guineas he could not undertake it. I think he must apply to some of his lady friends, for of all the fifteen hundred tailors not one will be at leisure in time for him. Henry had thought of leaving Edin^r. at present for economy ; to be proper, it requires a particular dress, but however he did not keep his intention, indeed I would rather have regretted it if he had, it would have been virtue overmuch.

The following letter comes from Georgina's pen. The Georgina of these days was evidently fair and frivolous—far different from the over-conscious aunt of later years, who was to receive, one by one, her brother's little children as they were sent home from India. That she was possessed of considerable good looks is evident from a pencil drawing done of her in middle life. Her visit to Edinburgh was to Mrs. Bruce, sister to Sir William Fettes, whose husband, Adam Bruce, had died in 1815.

¹ Clatto is distant about six miles from Cupar and four and a half from St. Andrews.

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He was cousin-germain to Robert Low, and there was therefore a double connection between the families. Their respective mothers had been Stobies of Wester Luscar,¹ descendants of that stalwart Covenanter, Adam Stobie, who was :

fined, imprisoned, sent to the Bass [an island more suited to sea fowl than for human habitation], & condemned to be transported beyond seas, but by a wonderful interposition of providence was landed in England & got safe home to his family.

He must have been a tough specimen,² for he was gathered to his fathers in 1711 at the ripe age of ninety-one. The stern and uncompromising spirit of this ancestor is certainly to be traced in some of his descendants.

Mrs. Bruce's home, like that of her brother, was a childless one, all her children having died long before this date, but to her husband's two nephews, John Mill, and his brother Charles—at this time serving with his regiment at the Cape, she was greatly devoted.

CLATTO, Sept. 3rd, 1822.

MY DEAREST JOHN,

My Mother tells me she wrote you since I went to Edinr. I thought I should very likely return without having a good look of His Majesty, but besides seeing him remarkably well at his entry and procession to the Castle, I had the good fortune to get two cards of invitation to meet the King, one to the Peers' Ball and the other to the Caledonian, which was being in very good luck. Captn. Duncan was so good as to procure them for me, he is an

¹ In the seventeenth century Wester Luscar (near Dunfermline) went by the name of Stobie's Luscar.

² There is an inscription to Adam Stobie at Carnoch on the monument of the well-known Covenanting Minister, the Rev. John Row, whose granddaughter he had married.

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acquaintance of Col. Bethune. The rooms were beautifully decorated, and the ladies in full Court dresses, except trains, and the gentlemen either in the same or uniform.

I was quite close to the King for an hour, and saw him shaking hands with several people, his manners seem very easy and his bow quite perfection ; he suggested that while he remained there should be only Scotch dancing, which he seemed to enjoy very much.

Henry got an invitation through Mr. Thomson of Charlton, and Catherine got an invitation to Hopetoun to a *déjeuné* which was given to His Majesty the day he embarked.

All Lord Hopetoun's ten sons were at home, the King shook hands with them all, and then the little girl of three months was brought in, and he took her in his arms and kissed her.

Catherine was in the saloon at the time he knighted Captn. Ferguson, the Keeper of the Regalia in Edinr. Castle, and Mr. Raeburn, portrait painter.

The King, it is said, ordered him to take a portrait of him in Highland garb, that he was dressed in at the levée.¹

The King remained about an hour, and then Lord Hopetoun went down with him to his barge. I saw the King also at the theatre ; the play was *Rob Roy* ; he laughed very much two or three times. It appears like a dream having seen so much in so short a time, and to remember all we heard.

His Majesty has gone away with a good impression of us ; they say nothing gave him greater pleasure than seeing the perfect order that prevailed. He said he had always understood that we were a proud nation, and we had reason to be as we seem to be a nation of gentlemen. In Ireland they say he was quite as well received, but the appearance of the common people was very different, some wanting a shoe, others a bit of their coat and so on, but in Edinr. the people were all remarkably well dressed. I daresay you are heartily tired of this epistle and *Court* matters, but you must be aware that I am very full of all that I have seen and my good fortune in seeing so much.

Your most sincerely affect^{te} sister
G. M. Low.

¹ At the National Gallery, Edinburgh.

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The fine bearing of the people on this occasion was approved by a far more illustrious pen. In a letter to Lady Abercorn, Sir Walter Scott says :¹

We have had a singular scene in Scotland, the visit of the King to Edinburgh . . . It went off very well, indeed surprisingly so considering we had no time for preparation, scarce a fortnight . . . From the highest to the lowest they [the people] were anxious to know what was proper to be done, and to do it when they learned, as well for their own sakes as the King's. It was a very curious thing to see the whole roads & streets lined with so many thousands of people who were, even the very meanest, in something like decent attire, & each considering himself obviously as part of the spectacle & as having the national reputation dependent to a certain degree on his behaviour. . . .

The enthusiasm with which the King was received was extraordinary, & yet it was mingled on several occasions with a sort of *retenue* quite characteristic of the people.

Only three days elapsed before the next letter. Clatto was at that time a very crowded house. Catherine Deas, who was not only the belle, but the *enfant gâté* of the family, came frequently from Edinburgh with her four children. She was attractive, and fond of society, but often ailing, and with her two unruly younger boys she was quite unable to cope ; fortunately for her the eldest son and her only daughter were unselfish and devoted children.

S. E. Low had not as yet set eyes on Sir John Malcolm, but she was always eager for news of the man who had first recognized the qualities of the beloved son.

¹ The success of the King's visit was in fact due, in a large measure, to the exertions of Scott behind the scenes ; to him everyone resorted for advice, and it needed all his wonderful tact and *bonhomie* to shepherd successfully the clansmen assembled in Edinburgh for the occasion.

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CLATTO, Sep. 7th.

. . . Georgina has written to you an account of her visit to Edin^r., but omitted what is most interesting. Catherine met with Sir Pulteney Malcolm ¹ at the *Déjeuné* at Hopetoun House ; he told her that his brother, Sir John, had gone to France for the recovery of his health, & that it had been his intention to come to Clatto to see your friends if he had not been ordered away.

Sir Pulteney spoke of his brother's attachment to you in terms that were most gratifying to us.

My heart warms to him, independent of his kindness & attachment to you, his conduct & character is such as claims admiration & respect from everyone who knows or has heard of him.

Ten thousand thanks for kind & generous offers about money, but God forbid that we should be so hardhearted as to accept them ; it would be *monstrous*.

Your father desires me to assure you we are all perfectly of one mind on the subject.

Catherine & her family are here, likewise Archibald & David Foulis, so the other day when Susan Bethune [her daughter Maria's baby of one year old] was here, there were three families of grandchildren, all of whom we are very fond of, but altho' it is said people like their grandchildren better than their children, I cannot allow it to be the case.

The Foulis' go to Dollar (to the Fettes') again at the end of the week, & the Deases for a week to Blebo, so there will be a calm ; at present we have dancing & music, not to speak of shouting & running up & downstairs with many calls to *keep to the broadside*, an injunction which I make no doubt you will remember.

When William Deas was here, he was continually asking why I never played on the piano ; I could not tell him, nor indeed any other person, that the truth was I could take no pleasure in it till we got your three letters from St. Helena.

I now feel differently & can enjoy playing. William was very successful on the first of the month ; I forget how many brace he brought in, but not under five ; he &

¹ Admiral Sir Pulteney Malcolm, who had a distinguished career in the Navy.

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Henry are out every day so we are well supplied & send many presents.

The Hunt ball is to be at the end of the month, & the Golf Meeting¹ at the beginning of October. Georgina goes with Maria to the balls ; we have entirely given up —that is a good thing tho' perhaps you may not regard it in that light.

Every tree in the garden is loaded with fruit ; peaches sell in Cupar for three halfpence a pound, that is when there are purchasers, but the gardener at Hilton cannot get them sold, so basket after basket is sent here to the great joy of all the young people !

CLATTO, Oct. 26th, 1822.

. . . This day we had the happiness of your letter of the 20th of August, one from William [her second son] & one from Susan of the 28th of March.

William was on his way from Arcot to Nagpore. He had spent a delightful time with the Foulis' & at Peter Cleghorn's.

I wrote to Catherine yesterday to try & send a miniature painter from Edin^r. since you wish it, & I hope she will be more successful than the last, at least mine. Your father's is as like as possible ;² as a proof we held up little Susan Bethune to look at them ; she considered mine very attentively but said nothing—the moment she was shown your father's—"Ah ! Granny-papa," & when we brought her back to mine—"A lady !" The said pictures were a present from Catherine, Maria & Georgina.

Mr. Mackenzie of Madras has just been here, & I have had a long conversation about your health ; he is decidedly of the opinion that you should return to Europe without loss of time. . . .

Dearest John, weigh this matter well, & do not let any consideration of money matters affect you, & if the answer

¹ In 1784 Robert Low had been Captain of the "Royal and Ancient," and eighty-one years later his son John was elected for the same. Henry Low appears to have been a keen golfer, for he won the gold medal given by the Club in 1821, 1823 and 1824.

² One of these portraits (said to be by a pupil of Raeburn's) is a delightful painting—the other wooden in the extreme.

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is go to Europe, then I pray you earnestly set off for Europe, & oh ! may God grant a happy issue.

The time had now come for the first member of the younger generation to follow the family example, and on November 21st S. E. Low writes to announce that :

William Deas is to take his passage. Mr. Lindsay of Balcarres has a son going at the same time. It is a curious circumstance that William was prevented from going to Balcarres by getting a fall from his horse, but in about eight days he got off to pay his visit, & found Mr. Charles Lindsay,¹ the young cadet, confined to bed & threatened with inflammation in his side by a fall from his horse, & indeed altho' it is nearly two months ago, he is only able to go out in the carriage yet.

When he goes to Madras I hope Foulis will show him every attention, & likewise William, but Foulis will be the most likely to have it in his power to be of service to him.

You will be sorry to hear that your uncle Maj. John Malcolm is dead: poor man he had suffered a good deal from universal gout, but his last illness was free from acute pain.

He has left a very comfortable provision to his widow & family, but I do not know particulars.

Miss Trail, the young lady who is a miniature painter is here ; she has finished mine & we think it very like, & she has this day begun your father's.

We thought it would be a pity to employ a bungler, & she is considered the second in Scotland. Her father is Minister (some words illegible) & has a large family, & she very properly turns her talent to account.

Adieu, my dearest John, you are our first thought when we wake & our last before we sleep ; what is very extraordinary to me I have never seen you in my dreams, which is a proof we do not dream of the things we think most of.

The postscript which follows gives a startling prescription :

¹ Charles Basil Lindsay, Madras Cavalry, son of the Hon. Robert Lindsay of Balcarres and grandson of Alexander, twenty-third Earl of Crawford.

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I have heard of a pea being put into the left arm for a cough, it is not painful, & if your physician approves I daresay you would have no objection.

When I say that a pea in the arm is not painful, I speak from experience.

I suggest my remedies with great diffidence, & always to be referred to your doctor.

He & you will perhaps have a laugh at the old lady's prescriptions, but if my letter finds you in laughing humour I am happy to be the subject.

One thing I may safely recommend, & that is, in addition to flannel next your skin, a new bit lard exactly where you feel the pain ; now laugh if you like, but do try it.

My dearest John you have taken the right way of spending your time in improving yourself in Latin or any other innocent pursuit, however no *intemperance* if I may so express myself, even in that.

John in the meantime had sailed from St. Helena to the Cape, and on January 17th, 1823, he wrote home that he was recovering fast and enjoying "Gig exercise," although obliged to decline all offers of hospitality :

No complaint requires abstention from company as much as mine . . . I have not resolution enough to be a mere spectator.

I now get on almost entirely without medicine and the only bleeding I have is from leeches, a great change for the better from the large blisters and copious bleedings that I used to have.

In May he started to return to India, and was to make a stay at Mauritius *en route*, but promised his parents to sail for home should he suffer from a relapse on arrival at Calcutta.

By steering for the Isle of France I shall there get into exactly the same climate as I have enjoyed at the Cape.

On board the *Anson* at Table Bay he makes a

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note of a letter sent to his brother Henry, whom he had last seen as a child of seven.

I have often thought of sending him home some little pocket-money, but something or other has always come in the way ; an unusual windfall however, viz. the recovery of about £200 out of the clutches of Defries & Company makes it peculiarly easy. I send him the enclosed draft for fifty guineas.

The next letters from Clatto tell of more than one gap in the family circle.

May 17th, 1823.

MY DEAREST JOHN,

You will most sincerely grieve to hear that we have lost our dear Susan Hill. She died on the 18th of last month after a long & painful illness that precluded all hopes of recovery, tho' what that illness was occasioned by the physician could not discover.

Her death is deeply felt by all who knew her, & to her poor mother it is an irreparable loss. Mrs. Hill has long been in a very bad state of health & consequent depression of spirits, & indeed is worn to a perfect skeleton. She seems to think recovery impossible ; however I cannot be of that opinion.

She is now to move into her old house in Castle Street, the one they have lived in since Susan had her annuity is too large for her, at least it is unsuitable to her finances.

Your father & I went to Edin^r. after poor Susan's death. We lived with Mrs. Bruce in her splendid house in Charlotte Square, where everything is most comfortable ; you do not always see comfort & elegance joined, in her dwelling they are completely so.

If you are still at the Cape tell Major Mill¹ that Mrs. Bruce complains of his silence. Mr. John Mill was in London when we were in Edin^r., Mr. Somerville [her son-in-law] too.

Edin^r. is much enlarged & the canal from Glasgow comes close to the new town. Lady Fettes drove me out to see

¹ Mrs. Bruce's nephew, Charles Mill, was in the 27th Regt. (Inniskillens).

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a fine aqueduct bridge the canal passes over ; it is within a few miles of the town. It consists of eight arches & is a sight well worth seeing.

The day I was persuaded to go I was not at all in spirits for seeing sights, but I was much gratified.

Cathey Deas is almost grown up, at least looks so, tho' only thirteen years old & as delightful a daughter as possible.

Aleck Deas is a fine fellow, Robert a bit of a pickle, but well disposed too. . . .

When Christie Walker & her mother were blocked up during the snow [in the neighbouring village of Blebo Craigs] & Christie was in great despair, her daughter said to her—" Ah ! Mither, dinna you be feared, somebody is thinking of you ! "

It so happened that Effie was right for I sent some tea, sugar, & the man I sent it with got another man, & when he presented the gift the daughter said—" Noo, Mither, dinna I tell you ? "

So my dear John wherever you are there is somebody & many bodies thinking of you & praying for your welfare.

The marriage of the eldest daughter of the Clatto family—a childless one—had not been too happy. Her husband, a brilliant, unstable creature, had been thoroughly spoilt from his childhood :

CLATTO, Aug. 15th, 1823.
MY DEAREST JOHN,

Maria wrote about a fortnight ago of the irreparable loss poor Charlotte has sustained by the death of her much-loved husband.

Poor Somerville went to London a fortnight ago to have an operation performed which could equally well have been performed in Edinr. ; the operation was performed, but it would appear that another disease attacked him of which he died.

Charlotte was much with him which she is thankful for ; his great friend Mr. Murray¹ of Albemarle Street wrote

¹ The second John Murray, of the famous publishing firm. The Murrays rented a villa at Wimbledon. John Murray's wife was a Miss Anne Elliot, whom he married in 1807.

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for her, indeed it was at his house at Wimbledon he died, where he had gone for change of air ; there is no describing the kindness of Mr. & Mrs. Murray.

Henry has entered into partnership with Mr. Rutherford, formerly Mr. Somerville's clerk, & their agreement is three-sixths of the business to Henry, two-sixths to Mr. Rutherford, & a sixth to poor Charlotte.

A number of the clients have agreed to remain with them & I hope they will do well. Charlotte will likewise have seventy pounds a year which was secured to her on Lowood, a small property of Mr. Somerville's in Roxburghshire.

You will be sorry to hear that his funds will not above half pay his debts, & that your father was security to him for the amount of above twelve hundred pounds, the half of which he expects to lose.

Poor Somerville, I freely forgive him, I am sure he must have suffered severely in his own mind for the situation he had plunged himself into & the injury he has done to others.

Georgina & Henry & Catherine are at Pitcaithley. Catherine has lately had an attack of cholera, which has been very prevalent in Edin^r. this terribly hot summer. We expect all the Deases & Archibald & David Foulis in about a fortnight's time, at which time the gooseberries will be in full force & I need not say they will be forcibly attacked.

Henry received your kind present, I need not say how gratified he feels for it.

The following letter, dated November 28th, is the last of the year sent from Clatto :

. . . We have been anxiously looking for letters from the Isle of France. . . .

Charlotte left us about a fortnight ago to spend a couple of months with the good old Doctor at Jedburgh. After that she returns here & remains till November, 1824, then takes up her home in Edin^r.

By that time she will have sufficient funds to pay for that part of the furniture she has occasion for, & altho' there must be a great change in her manner of living, she

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is thankful she has an independence, which at one time we did not look for.

Hilton is to sell for ten thousand pounds. It cost poor Col. Deas more first & last, but such has been the depression of land of late years that we look upon the sale as something to be thankful for.

The Doctor & Mrs. Macdonald [the Minister of the parish] were at Pitcaithley ¹ this season—not one fine day during their three weeks, but the Doctor said he never minded the rain, but went to the well & drank his portion—an enormous one.

They walked to Naughton lately [a matter of about ten miles], paid a visit of two days & jogged home again. Mrs. Morrison ² pressed them to take the carriage, but they would not, & they were right, for when people require their friend's carriages it becomes so troublesome that the offer ceases to be made.

Major Mill never writes. Mrs. Bruce is quite displeased at it & no wonder, but she continues to be very fond of him & his brother.

Dr. James Macdonald, D.D., and his wife, of whom the Clatto letters are full, had been established for many years in the parish of Kemback.

It had been well for the kirk that in the preceding century the Moderate or Latitudinarian party should have prevailed, and that men of good birth and wide culture should have kept in check the over-stern traditions of the Covenanters.

But at this period a widespread reaction had long since set in, and resentment against the Law of Patronage was seething in Scotland.

This old man and his wife appear to have been of the ripest eighteenth-century vintage.

¹ Pitcaithley, a Spa in Perthshire, much frequented at this time.

² Mrs. Morrison of Naughton—one of S. E. Low's greatest friends—was the widow of one of the Bethunes of Blebo. She resumed her maiden name on succeeding to her father's property.

CHAPTER II

Return to India, 1824-1826

JOHN LOW reached the island of Mauritius safely, but while there suffered from so severe a relapse that he was unable to proceed any further for more than a year, during which time he entered no records of correspondence in his letter-book. Later on—from India—he tells his family that he was in fact so ill that he could neither go on to India nor remain in the steamy heat of Port Louis, and that he would have returned to the Cape, but that the ship on which he was to have taken passage was destroyed in a hurricane.

Fortunately for him the neighbouring island provided a better climate, and in the “highlands of Bourbon” he recovered his health.

In subsequent correspondence he also refers to a large packet of letters sent from the Isle of France which went down in the *George the Fourth*, which was wrecked before reaching the Cape. There is a long interval between S. E. Low's last letter and the following—dated June 12th, 1824 :

... Charlotte is in as good spirits as can be looked for, & goes down to Blebo every day, where she is much amused with Susan & Margaret.

Sir William Fettes has had a long & dangerous illness

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(rose in the head), he is now recovering & they go to Gogar Bank as soon as he is able.

Georgina went to Edin^r. to be with her aunt a few days after Sir William was taken ill, and has been there all the time.

Sir William purchased Gogar Bank, near Edin^r. last winter. Poor Mrs. Hill remains in the same depressed state of spirits, her health is a degree better. There are some things to be thankful for in her situation ; her appetite is better and she sleeps well, she likes to have her person, house and table kept in the greatest degree of order, and has faithful attached servants who study to make her comfortable.

I wish I could think of something more lively than a report of the sick, for altho' that is interesting it cannot be called amusing.

On arrival in India, John wrote to his father, making reference to earlier letters of which no copy exists.

MANGALORE, 24th October, 1824.
MY DEAREST FATHER,

My last letters home were three, all dated the 26th June, one to you, one to Catherine and the third to Sir William Fettes from Bourbon ; you would be prepared by these letters for soon hearing both of my restored health and my return to India.

I am obliged to be careful as to diet, but with the care which has now become habitual to me I suffer no pain whatever, and find that the only difference between what I was in 1820, is that I am not so capable of bodily fatigue. . . .

I have heard from Foulis the other day, who is at Madras preparing to depart finally for Fife. There have lately been great changes in the Service, which have benefited him in a very material degree—instead of returning, as he formerly expected to do, at £365 per annum, he now gets £450 immediately, and in the course of a few years (he'll remain snug in Fife the time), it will run to an income of £1,050 from the Company.

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On the 5th November, while on his way to Poona, he wrote again to his father :

Two days ago I received a number of letters from Government & from Bithoor, showing me that the interests of some of the Native Chiefs under my control had been sadly neglected during my absence—that their affairs have been so mismanaged that I shall now have an intricate mass of counter-claims to unravel, which will be a tedious & troublesome task for me at Bombay & Poona.

His letter concludes by begging his father to sell the outlying and larger part of the property, which the latter was reluctant to do, insomuch as it meant diminishing his son's inheritance:

All that I have now to say about your affairs is to beg you to rest assured that the way you can afford me the highest satisfaction is to make your arrangements about selling Callange, not with reference to what will prove the cheapest plan for me, but to what will tend the most to your own & my mother's comfort through the evening of your lives, & in saying this I am perfectly confident that I speak the sentiments of the rest of the family—all of us.

The four months during which he was obliged to remain in Bombay, was spent as the guest of the Governor, Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, for whom he conceived a feeling approaching to veneration.¹

The loneliness of his life caused him frequently to make his pen his confidant, and with the further desire to preserve the memory of characteristics which he desired to emulate, he compiled a voluminous record of the impressions made on him by his host.

¹ Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779–1859), fourth son of the eleventh Baron Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay 1819–27.

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... I have watched him as narrowly as opportunities permitted, both in his official conduct and in his behaviour as a private gentleman, and I certainly consider his character to be nearer perfection than that of any other man I have ever met.

William Deas had by this time arrived in India, but uncle and nephew had not yet met. On December 12th, John Low wrote from Bombay to his mother :

... I have a letter from William Deas dated the 4th instant . . . I am much disappointed at finding that he has left your miniatures at Madras, so that many months will elapse before I can get them.

My business here is tedious ; it requires reference to Calcutta, where for the present they have neglected me in attending to the more important matter of the Burmah War.¹

Colonel Foulis, who was now embarking for home, had been preceded one year earlier by his wife, the only member of his family with whom John, since boyhood, had had any personal contact. In the earlier years of his service, when quartered at Vellore, he had seen much of this sister.

She had first come out in 1814 with her elderly husband of forty-five, a young wife of twenty, who had left her firstborn at the parental home.

Six years later, the state of her health made it necessary for her to leave India ; her husband soon joined her, but they both went back to India after a year and a half spent in Scotland, leaving their second son to be a companion to his brother,

¹ The first Burmese War, 1824-6, at the close of which most of the sea front was annexed, and a Protectorate established over Assam.

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but taking the third, a baby named Robert, born in Fife, with them.

Susan was now at Clatto, having left India for good ; on the homeward voyage, in addition to her own little boy, she had had five other infants entrusted to her care, two of them being the sons of Peter Cleghorn (the son of their Fife neighbour), who was at that time Registrar of the Supreme Court, Madras, and had been recently left a widower with four children.

S. E. Low, at the time her son was writing from Bombay, was inditing a budget of family "intelligence," and further recounting an event which to her was of real importance. The long-talked-of visit from Sir John Malcolm had taken place.

CLATTO, Dec. 9th, 1824.

. . . It is now a very long time since we heard from you, and much anxious looking out we have had for ships from the Isle of France ; your last letter was dated 5th October, 1823. . . .

Towards the end of October Sir John Malcolm favoured us with a visit, a most delightful one to us & for which I cannot express how much we felt ourselves obliged.

Independent of the great gratification of hearing the manner in which he spoke of you, he is himself so great a character, & at the same time so good & so agreeable (though that is but a poor word to use to express the delight of his conversation), that I shall always reckon the having spent a day with him as one of the *azure spots* in my existence.

One thing is truly magnanimous in him, notwithstanding his then recent disappointment about the Government of Madras, he was in as good spirits as if he had got it instead of losing it, & not one word of reflection did he cast upon any party concerned.

I see by my notes that my last was dated June, but every day, every day, I was looking for letters, & I often thought that you yourself might pop in upon us.

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We had a full house during the harvest. Catherine & her three, Susan & her three, & Henry, making great stampede among the hares & partridges, & an occasional pheasant, a bird which is much more common than formerly.

Charlotte was at Blebo during the bustle, but came up every day & took much pleasure in playing on Susan's delightful pianoforte.

It was debated *in full assembly* whether Archibald & David Foulis would be better at Dollar or the New Institution in Edin^r., & carried for the latter.

So Susan sacrificed her wish for remaining here & took a lodgings in Edin^r.,—the boys to go to school at nine in the morning & don't return home till three ; they are not at study all that time, but all the class-rooms are in one building in the middle of an ample playground, surrounded by a wall, at the door of which is a porter's lodge with bread to be sold, but nothing else ; in another lodge are all the books required, paper, etc., & the different classes have different hours for play, but no stirring out of the gates till three o'clock.

Charlotte is still here, & means to be till about a year after this. She was entitled to about a thousand pounds from Mr. Somerville's effects, & the creditors are so good as not to dispute it ; part of it was employed in buying as much of the furniture as she will require, with the rest she means to buy a flat in the new buildings which are on Lord Murray's grounds ; they are upon a plan quite new in Edin^r., & extremely comfortable.

The Bethunes are all well ; Maria is turned too stout for the appearance of her person, her face fully as handsome as ever. Susan¹ is a superior child in point of talent & is genteel in appearance. Margaret is pretty & Alexander a fine stout fellow of his *months*.

Sir William Fettes' illness was tedious & painful, but

¹ Susan Bethune, 1821-1900, m. David Gillespie of Mountquhanie, Fife.

Margaret, 1823-99, m. 1st, George Paton, Senator of the College of Justice, of the Cairnies, Perthshire, and 2nd, Major Malcolm Paton.

Alexander Bethune of Blebo, 1824-1900, 42nd Royal Highlanders.



MARIA LOW, WIFE OF MAJ.-GEN. BETHUNE OF
BLEBO

SUSAN LOW, WIFE OF MAJ.-GEN. SIR DAVID
FOULIS, K.C.B.



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at length, thank God, he recovered. Lady Fettes always wrote pressing Georgina to stay & she went with them to Gogar Bank.

It is not far from Milburn Tower,¹ a place belonging to Sir Robert Liston, formerly Ambassador to Constantinople; Georgina was charmed with them & their place, indeed it is a place strangers go to see, full of the curiosities of many countries.

Lady Fettes appears never to have been happy without a niece in attendance. So nervous and highly strung was she that in earlier days, when staying at Clatto with her only child, she insisted, when visiting at Hilton and Cairnie Lodge (which were approached by a steep hill), on the coachman driving down it with a second pair of reins! Young Fettes had been much with his cousins, and family tradition has it that he wanted to marry one of them.

The visit of Sir John Malcolm to Clatto was described at greater length by himself in a letter to his eldest daughter.²

From Tuliboli [the home of Sir Harry Moncrieff] I made an excursion of thirty-five miles to see old Mr. Low of Clatto, the father of John Low, who was so long with me in India, and ranks at the head of my *soldier* favourites.

I had given no warning, for I was uncertain to the last whether I should be able to visit them.

When I entered the drawing-room, I found a respectable-looking old lady, whom I knew from her countenance to be the mother of my friend.

I announced myself, and she gave almost a shout of

¹ Described by Scott in his journal of 1828, after a visit paid to "the venerable diplomatist" as "a beautiful retreat."

² Given in Kaye's *Life and Letters of Sir John Malcolm*. "It was to his simplicity and manliness of character [writes Kaye] that he principally owed his extraordinary dominion over the natives of India."

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delight. She hastened out of the room, & returned with one of the heartiest and happiest looking of men on the verge of fourscore I had ever seen.

His large hand was stretched out to welcome the General about whom his boys (his son William had also been with me) had written so much.

“ Their letters,” said he, “ have contained little for six years but Sir John Malcolm, and here you are at Clatto.” I told him I was aware he had heard enough of me, and was therefore determined to let him see what kind of a person it was about whom his sons, particularly John, had plagued him so much.

At this moment Colonel Bethune, a son-in-law who lived near, and had come in, was going to send away his horse to walk home, but I begged that he would lend him to me as I saw the spires of the auld town of St. Andrews at about six miles’ distance.

“ It is now two o’clock,” I said. “ I shall return by five after seeing the once-celebrated residence of royalty and present seat of learning. Besides I have four old Indian friends that I must shake hands with.”

“ You are most welcome to the horse,” said Colonel Bethune. “ It rains,” said Mr. Low.

“ I will not halt long enough,” I replied, “ at any place to get wet.”

“ Go along,” said old Low, “ it is exactly as John wrote us, and bring any or all your friends that you can persuade to dinner. I have sent for my youngest son, Henry, who is ten miles off, shooting, but the servant knows why he is wanted, and said he would find and bring him if above ground.”

Away I trotted, saw the noble remains of monasteries, cathedrals and palaces [*sic*] at St. Andrews, shook hands with a General Campbell who was kind to me as a boy, with a Colonel Wilson, who was Secretary to my Commander *when I was at my wildest*, and whose goodness has helped me out of many a scrape ; and with Captain Binny, who taught me Persian, and with Colonel Glass, a brother sportsman.

They were not less surprised than delighted with this flying visit, and it gave me much gratification. I got back in time for dinner at Clatto, where I passed a delightful evening.

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The old gentleman, who had returned from India forty-four years ago, married a Miss Malcolm,¹ bought the estate and built the house [he largely demolished and rebuilt an older house], an excellent one, in which he has lived ever since.

He, or rather she, for it is as usual the mother's work, has brought up a large family, all of whom are well settled in life. Two of the daughters married intimate friends of mine, Colonel Deas and Colonel Foulis; another married Colonel Bethune, who has the adjoining estate, and one, unmarried, lives with Mrs. Low's sister, Lady Fettes, near Edinburgh.

With the family materials I had, and the praises truth enabled me to give their sons, you may suppose conversation did not flag.

But there was another source of pleasure to the old gentleman. Several officers who had been his friends as ensigns had by accident been my commanding officers when I first went to India.

The revival of these personalities and localities delighted him beyond measure. He gave me Madeira sixty years old, which he had brought from India. His memory was as fresh as if he had only left the scenes of which we talked a few months.

"I have to thank God," said he, when we parted, "for the health and happiness I enjoy, but I was beginning to think it was but a frail tenure a man of my age held life upon. This visit, however, is like a new lease. I shall live for some years upon the recollection of this day."

Mrs. Low, with whom both your mother and yourself would be much pleased, confirmed this speech next morning at six o'clock, when she rose to get me my breakfast, before I went away in the Cupar coach. She gave me more calm, but not less sincere thanks for my considerate visit. I assured her that I had gratified myself as much as I had them and went towards Edinburgh in good humour with myself and all the world.

The meeting between John Low and his nephew took place in March, 1825, and on the 27th of

¹ There was no relationship between Sir John Malcolm's family and S. E. Low's.

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that month he wrote to the boy's mother from Poona :

MY DEAREST KATHERINE,

It is a long time since I wrote to you, but still longer since I heard from you. I am really quite delighted with William, there is something so gentlemanlike in his manners, his disposition so amiable, and above all his conduct so unusually well regulated for a lad of his age, that he is quite a companion for a man of any age, without being at all above the gaiety of youth.

I am much vexed at being obliged to part with him so soon, but I shall want more leave for him before long, so that I thought it more prudent not to plague his Commanding Officer for an extension.

I expect to get through my business here in about six weeks, when I shall start marching for Bithoor, unless I should hear of a ship about to start for Calcutta from Bombay.

William is now sitting by me copying one of my dispatches. . . . I am much relieved at hearing that poor Charlotte has got some little income secured to her.

On the same date he wrote to his father, urging the advantage of Cavalry appointments. The lot of the Infantry Officer in the pay of John Company at this date appears to have been deplorable.

. . . To give you a correct notion of the comparative value of Cavalry & Infantry appointments, I may mention that young Deas draws now, as a Cornet, a little more than Captains of Infantry, many of whom have been twenty-four and twenty-five years in India.

The Cavalry are scarcely ever stationed in unhealthy parts of the country, because it is only in forest & hilly country that sickness is very prevalent, where the Cavalry cannot act.

In making an independent fortune, it really must not be looked to in the Bombay or Madras armies, excepting by those whose constitutions permit them to remain about forty years in them, when they will probably get a Regiment, which is £1,000 per annum.

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The above is, I assure you, no overdrawn picture of the reduced value of the Services, & I wish to point them out with a view of guiding my friends,—sisters in particular—in the choice of professions for their sons.

Earlier in the month, S. E. Low sent a letter from Clatto :

... If our letters are not detained at the Cape, you will receive such packets on your arrival at Bithoor that it will be a fatigue to get through them.

Charlotte has bought a very pretty flat in Pitt Street ; it is the first floor. She paid five hundred & fifty pounds for it ; it has never been inhabited & is, they say, the greatest bargain ever was known.

Sir William is now in high health & buoyant spirits, purchasing estates at a great rate—one in Fife, one in Ayrshire, & Red Castle in Inverness-shire.

He has already advertised Red Castle to be let ; it is a beautiful place. The Fife & Ayrshire properties have no mansion house, at least the Fife has not any.

His landed estates have cost him above two hundred thousand, so I suppose he will not buy any more.

He is educating two boys called Gordon, who are relations of his & it is supposed that one of them is to be his heir. Henry is Sir William's man of business, so that his great landed properties will be much more profitable than if he had continued a monied man. We are happy to see that the Court of Directors have given Sir John Malcolm¹ a thousand a year, but I hope he may still get some high employment if he wishes to go out again.

Did you ever read *Old Mortality*?—Lady Margaret Bellenden, a character in it, is constantly referring to a visit which she had *from His Sacred Majesty*. I sometimes think I am like that in regard to Sir John Malcolm's visit. . . .

I mean to write to my dear William [her second son] soon. . . .

¹ Malcolm succeeded Elphinstone as Governor of Bombay in the following year.

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In August of this year Robert Low wrote to his son—the only letter of his that has survived :

MY DEAR JOHN,

Altho' this letter will be short, it will be very pleasant. I have the happiness to tell you that by Martinmas I shall be free of debt. Altho' I will not have much over, yet it is agreeable to have all my debts paid in my own lifetime. . . .

We have the whole family here except Henry & Charlotte, young & old, which makes a numerous & agreeable party. As I wish to lose no time in letting you know of the sale, I shall now send off this letter immediately, & believe me always, my dear John,

Your affecte father,

ROBERT LOW.

The next entry in John Low's letter-book is dated June 19th, and written "On board the *Mermaid*." A vessel, Calcutta bound, sailing from Bombay¹ at the convenient moment, he started by this immensely circuitous route, intending to do the next stage of his journey by river. To have gone by dâk to Bithur would have taken less time, although by modern standards a lengthy enough transit. Reaching Calcutta by September, he learnt that he had been appointed to the Residency of Jaipur, from which place he wrote on December 10th to his mother :

. . . I was busily engaged an hour ago with two Vakeels from the Rajah of Bikaneer regarding a boundary dispute between him & the Government of Jyepoor, when I was most agreeably interrupted by the arrival of your letters of the 10th & 16th of March.

¹ The account of a journey from Bombay to Simla undertaken by an officer of the Bengal Engineers in 1838, is given in *Bygone Days in India*, by Douglas Dewar. The officer in question left Bombay on Jan. 9th, and reached his destination on May 3rd.

RETURN TO INDIA

When I tell you that the last letter that I had from home was dated the 13th of December last year, you will easily imagine how acceptable they must have been.

My letter from Calcutta will have apprised you of my being appointed to this Agency, the duties of it involve much—serious reflection & a good deal of anxiety.

The great distance from the Company's Provinces renders the wages of servants, & the price of supplies & furniture so high that the saving cannot be as large as I had hoped for, but I shall save 1,500 rupees a month—(about £150), which being the whole of my receipts at Bithoor, you will be convinced that I have reason to be satisfied, added to which this place affords a very superior climate to that of Bithoor.

In Europe this would be a splendid income, & God knows it is a handsome one anywhere, but money does not go far here—all our customs, our food, clothing, amusements, such for instance as English reading, are procurable only at high prices.

The only European society I have is the Doctor, who belongs to the station & who lives with me. He is a Scotchman of the name of Simpson, very well disposed & peculiarly kind & attentive to his patients.

The nearest place where any Europeans reside is Nusseerabad,¹ which is about 90 miles off, but on the high road between Delhi & several of the Bengal stations, so that I see passengers occasionally, & real truth is that unless old friends pay me visits, I have no wish for frequent visitors.

It would materially interfere with my schemes for saving money & getting home, & next to my official duties that is what chiefly occupies my thought.

Last year when I was not aware of any situation in the Political Line would become vacant, & still less of succeeding to it, I had almost made up my mind to go home (for three years) overland, with Mr. Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, who wanted me to be of his party.

At the end of the month he wrote again to his mother, mentioning an event which made much stir in India, namely, the arrival at Calcutta of the

¹ Nasirabad.

FIFTY YEARS WITH JOHN COMPANY

first steamship to accomplish the long sea route via the Cape :

The newspapers from Calcutta which reached me yesterday announced the long-expected arrival of the *Enterprise*, steam vessel, and this day I got your letter by her of the 26th July, and much real satisfaction it afforded me. Georgina's windfall of nine hundred pounds ¹ is an important addition to her little fortune, and I beg you to give her my congratulations.

The steam vessel, owing to some bad luck in regard to weather and still more in regard to the inexperience of the Commander as to what he most wanted, namely, coals in a greater number of stations, has made a very slow passage of it.

The *Enterprise* had indeed made a slow passage of it. She left Falmouth on August 16th, and anchored off Calcutta on the 8th December, the voyage having lasted 113 days and seventeen hours, forty days of which were passed under canvas ! ² She had to carry an immense load of coal—stored in every conceivable place, and was on fire at one time during the voyage. The few passengers who were adventurous enough to take passage in her complained both of the unpleasant degree of heat and of the coal dust.

On the 17th of this month Robert Low died at Clatto, but the news did not reach India until the following summer, and John sent two further letters to his father :

¹ Georgina had been left this legacy by a godfather.

² She was largely owned by London East India Agency houses and, the voyage having proved such a disappointment, was sold by the shareholders to the East India Company for use in Eastern waters, being later of immense value to the Company in the Burmese War. It was not for many years that a regular steamship service was established via the Cape.

RETURN TO INDIA

JYEPOOR, Jan. 5th, 1826.
MY DEAR FATHER,

. . . We have interesting work going on in India, especially at Bhurtpoor. The latter is about the strongest native fort in this country, & Lord Lake¹ having been repulsed at it, the natives deem it impregnable.

Lord Combermere² is before it with a tremendous force of all descriptions, & I hope in a few days to hear of its fall; an event which will facilitate my work at this Court. The long war in Ava³ & the high opinion of the Bhurtpoor force, has given an impression that British power in the East is by no means as supreme as it was.

I grieve to say that John Cleghorn⁴ died at sea last year. The account of it only reached India a few weeks ago.

Feb. 4th, 1826.

. . . Upon the whole your account of the sale of Callange is very satisfactory, . . . because it has only been rising during the last five or six years to its present value.

You had the peculiarly bad luck, owing to the long lease, of not participating in the general gains of landed proprietors during the war, & again you suffered on the change to peace by your land falling into your hands reduced to half its former value.⁵

Bhurtpoor was taken by assault on the 18th of last month, & all this side of India will be at peace in consequence for many years.

The following is to his mother. The home circle was much exercised about the start in life of

¹ The fort, in 1805, withstood four assaults by Lord Lake's army.

² Sir Stapleton Cotton, 1773-1865. Created Viscount Combermere.

³ Ava, the ancient capital, was the headquarters of the army during the war with Burma.

⁴ Peter Cleghorn's elder brother.

⁵ They, i.e. the landlords, invested much capital in the improvement of land, and were amply rewarded by rents which often rose during the Napoleonic Wars to four or five times what they had been in the former generation. (*British History in the 19th Century*, G. N. Trevelyan—Chap. 9).

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Catherine Deas's younger sons. It was hoped that both would obtain appointments in the Company's Army, and Aleck, the elder of the two, was already at Addiscombe College.

... Now comes your long & welcome letter of the 12th October. These letters are really quite delightful as they put my mind at rest regarding the future comfort of my father & yourself, for with all the philosophy, & religion too that the best of us can bring to our aid, we are sadly dependent, to a certain extent at least, on money. . . . I know Col. Houston¹ very well & have just written to him. I cannot help again assuring Catherine that if Mr. Ravenshaw can only give an Infantry Cadetship, she ought to ask for a Bengal one. . . .

By July the news of his father's death reached him, and also of the failure of the Fife Bank, in which the family fortunes were deeply involved. No home letters telling of these events were preserved.

Robert Low was beloved by all his children, and his genial, kindly nature endeared him to a large circle of friends. In his younger days he had been a keen rider to hounds, and many a hearty carouse did the Fife hunting lairds have at that time at the old Peat Inn on the "Ribs of Fife."

He started life in very comfortable circumstances ; as an only surviving child, he had inherited money from his parents and during the years of his service in India the "shaking of the Pagoda Tree" still yielded fruit.

In the course of the Clatto letters there are few indications of the proverbial Scotch thrift ; the years following the close of the Napoleonic Wars hit the landed classes very hard, and their pro-

¹ The Head of Addiscombe College at this time.

RETURN TO INDIA

clivities appear to have been spendthrift rather than otherwise.

An account of his death, and also details concerning the Fife Bank failure, are given in some old letters at Wakefield (now Strathvithie House). The head of the family, Hugh Cleghorn, a most remarkable man, had married Rachel Makgill of Kemback, a property in the same parish as Clatto.

He was now between seventy and eighty years of age, and had been long a widower. He was living at Wakefield with his three unmarried daughters, and the two little motherless sons of his only surviving son, Peter, who had been sent home from India in the charge of Susan Foulis.

In earlier life he had been Professor of Civil History at the University of St. Andrews, but being of the type that prefers the making of history to imparting it, he migrated to the continent and kept a watchful and wary eye on the kaleidoscopic scene. The French had invaded Flanders, Piedmont, Savoy, Switzerland and Holland, and when in 1794 the Dutch sued for peace, he sensed an opportunity, and reported to Henry Dundas, Viscount Melville (President of the Board of Control), in whose confidence he was, and by whom he was at once entrusted with a delicate and entirely secret mission.

By the publication of his diary¹ (1795-6) the story of Cleghorn's achievement has of recent years been given to the world, and his qualities of cool courage, indomitable will and tact, are more to be admired from the modesty of the record, which

¹ *The Cleghorn Papers*, edited by the Rev. William Neill, and with a Foreword by his great-grandson, the late Sir Alexander Sprot, Bart., of Strathvithie.

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proves that the lines inscribed on his tombstone in the parish of Dunino contain no idle boast :

He was the agent by whose instrumentality the Island of Ceylon was annexed to the British Empire.

Having with considerable difficulty persuaded the Comte de Meuron, Colonel and Proprietor of a Swiss regiment in the pay of the Dutch East India Company, an elderly and lethargic man, to accompany him from Switzerland to Ceylon and arrange for the transfer of the regiment to the British, the couple made their journey (mostly a series of unpleasant adventures) by the overland route. The Dutch were in a difficult position, their Prince was dethroned and they had no love for the French, and it was as a bloodless victory that the island passed into British possession.

Cleghorn was eventually rewarded by a gift from Government of £5,000—no excessive sum, and shortly afterwards purchased the property of Strathvithie, near St. Andrews, and settled down to the life of a country gentleman.

On December 25th, 1825, he wrote to his son, Peter :

... I received your most affectionate letter yesterday while passing through St. Andrews to attend the funeral of Mr. Low. I have lost a friend with whom I lived for nearly half a century in the most kind & confidential habits without one moment of coldness or reserve.

He was eminently good-tempered without a particle of selfishness ; he was warm in his friendships without any bitterness in his enmities.

... The fortunate sale of Callange will leave the female branches of the family, I trust, well provided for.

... I have seen Mrs. Low & the ladies. She bears her calamity with her usual resignation & fortitude.

RETURN TO INDIA

Robert Low had not been able to leave much more than his now-much-reduced landed property, and as it was a case of unlimited liability for the unfortunate holders of the Fife Bank stock, this was now virtually in the hands of the creditors. A letter from the family lawyer to the Bank Cashier proves the case to have been a hard one.

Mr. Low held two shares in the stock of the First Company, & on the expiry of the contract, he was most anxious to withdraw.

In order, however, to overcome his reluctance & to procure his accession to the new Contract, six of the Partners agreed to guarantee him from all loss. . . .

The Trustees of Mr. Low, on the failure of the concern, raised an Action of Relief & obtained Decree of Relief, but in consequence of the death or insolvency of all these parties, at most a mere trifle has been recovered from some of their estates.

The whole country was passing through a time of financial crisis in which the failure of one small country bank was but a drop in the ocean. The comments of Cleghorn to his son reveal the sagacity of the man :

. . . You must have heard from many quarters of the most unwarranted terror in the money market ; it occasioned a sudden depreciation of the Funds, & the ruin of some great Houses in London.

The panic is now over & most of the Banking Houses have resumed payment. . . .

The distress has been little felt in Scotland. The Fife Bank is, I believe, the only one that has suffered.

The directors were county gentlemen, Cupar Writers & farmers, who knew nothing of banking.

So many banks & so sudden a panic while Europe is in profound peace & while the general market is over-stocked with money ! I have never heard it explained,

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nor can I account for it. But I am convinced that things will come round & that those money dealers only will suffer who have been speculating upon fictitious capitals.

A few days later he writes :

I am just returned from St. Andrews, where I went this morning to learn such particulars concerning the Fife Bank as have transpired.

Matters are much worse than I have stated. Some doubtful debts may be recovered, but there is still a loss of £63,000 among the sharers.

I am sincerely sorry that Mr. Low had at least two shares between him & Henry.

On the day of his death he was obliged to sign a joint Bond with five or six of the Heritable Proprietors for £25,000 to the British Linen Co. & Commercial Banks as holders of the Fife notes to that extent.

I have no doubt that these affairs accelerated his death. The report is that Clatto must be sold.

It only remained for John in India to eventually repurchase the family home. The full extent of the liabilities was not known for a long time, and for many years correspondence connected with the Fife Bank failure caused him anxiety and trouble.

CHAPTER III

Jaipur, 1826-1828

AT Jaipur the autumn of 1826 was a strenuous one for John Low. He speaks of "a continued and harassing press of business, constant work, great heat from without and anxiety within." To Susan Foulis he wrote that the news from home had reached him "when civil war was raging in my kingdom here."

Your letter announcing the melancholy intelligence of our father's death completely deprived me of that sort of spirits which are required to have any inclination for chit-chat.

. . . I hope in two or three months to bring this wretchedly ill-governed Principality into a state of more tranquillity.

I am very glad that you & Foulis are talking less frequently of returning to India, especially when I look back on the state of bad health that you almost always suffered in this country.

Foulis, too, was not without several warnings that he had been long enough in a tropical country.

. . . That robust health which I enjoyed when you were at Vellore, such as permitted of cricket & fives playing is gone for ever!—at least as long as my fate condemns me to live in Hindoostan.

The next letters are to his mother, on the bank failure.

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JYEPOOR, *October 11th, 1826.*

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I cannot help fearing that you have concealed the real state of the case from the generous fear that I might make greater exertions for your relief. The value you seem to put upon Lady Fettes' ¹ £40 per annum impresses on my mind that your income is sadly reduced. . . .

I trust you will be able to remain at Clatto; indeed you must not on any account think of quitting that house. I can imagine that your feelings must be something like those of Farmer Edwards in *The Man of Feeling* ²—who said he considered “every tree & bush in it as his father, his brother or his child,” & it would be misery to yourself & all of us, were you ever forced to quit the scene of such associations.

I yet hope fervently to pass many a happy day with you at Clatto, & if I could envy any portion of Henry's happiness in life, it would be his having so sacred a duty to perform as that of attending to your comfort.

I am much disappointed at Henry's silence. We are both bad correspondents, but he is rather the most in fault, for I have not heard from him for five or six years. I wrote to him from the Cape of Good Hope three years ago, & I think once since.

I am very glad to hear such favourable accounts of Aunt Hill's recovery—a little more time will, I have no doubt, effect wonders, & particularly so if she is not urged by friends to join in society.

Susan wrote to me that she went constantly to see her, *although Mrs. Hill told her that visits were irksome.* That was very injudicious of Susan, & if I could have flown to see her I would have given her a good *lecture*, if it were possible to lecture a person so warm-hearted & benevolent. It was only an error in judgment.

I have much more to do than is pleasant, but I have a good library & my violincello, & what with that & my public business, contrive to pass my time without ennui, tho' I sigh sometimes for a view of my native land & my natural friends, but as I know I must sigh for several years more, I repress such thoughts as much as possible.

¹ Lady Fettes, whose personal fortune was small, had determined to help her sister in this crisis.

² By Henry MacKenzie.

JAIPUR

November 22nd, 1826.

. . . Your letter of the 12th June reached me in the short time of five months from its date. I have had a sadly fatiguing & vexatious duty here; the great hereditary Chiefs have not only been quarrelling amongst themselves, but a large portion of them were in open rebellion against the Dowager Queen, who during the childhood of the Prince had been entrusted with the Government under certain restrictions, which she has latterly disregarded completely, & had allowed her favourites to act with horrible injustice & oppression.

A meeting of these barbarians was accordingly resolved on to discuss the affairs of the State during the remaining minority of the Rajah.

These discussions were held in my presence, & considering the violent animosity against each other, & the unreasonableness in all matters of business of many of these Chiefs, it is perhaps as well as could have been expected.

It will be satisfactory to you at all events to find that my conduct has been highly approved by my own Government.

I enclose one extract from one of the Governor-General's¹ late dispatches.

On December 21st, he wrote a letter to Sir John Malcolm, in which occurs an echo of the famous visit :

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

I shall not easily forget your tall figure² upon your tall horse, cantering about this day eight years ago at the head of your division, amidst dust & smoke & grape shot, surrounded by your numerous staff & friends. . . .

¹ William Pitt Amherst, Earl Amherst (1773-1857), Governor-General—1823-8.

Extract of a dispatch from the G.-G. to Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bt., Resident in Rajpootana, Oct., 1826, which states that the success of Captain Low's measures—"both in bringing about a friendly meeting of those Chiefs for the purpose of discussion, and in satisfactorily ascertaining their real sentiments, can scarcely fail of producing the most important and beneficial consequences."

² The battle of Maheidpore.

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May you live to enjoy many happy returns of so important a day in your eventful life. You will probably have heard of my nomination to this Court. I attribute my success on this occasion to my fortunate connection with yourself in the campaign of 1817-1818.

I had no more interest with Lord Amherst or any of his Council than I have with the Pope of Rome. A public memorial to the Governor-General, aided by Swinton's¹ opinion, obtained for me the selection, & without your record of my services, which I attached, I am confident it could have been of no avail. . . .

You completely won the heart of my good mother & crowned my numerous obligations to you by your visit to Clatto. I had the misfortune last year to lose my worthy father, & shortly afterwards the Fife Bank went to ruin, by which my mother suffered a severe loss to her income, the interest however I can easily make up. It will keep me several more years in this country. . . .

Early in the following year his mother again visited Edinburgh.

March 18th, 1827.

. . . We have been here for several weeks with our great friend Mrs. Bruce.

Before you receive this you will have heard that Col. Foulis is again sailed for India. I leave Edin^r. immediately, & Georgina stays with Susan: she expects to be confined in May.

Somerville's affairs must keep Henry for long. The particulars I cannot now enter on, but when I get time I shall endeavour to give you some idea, tho' to say truth it is so complicated it puzzles my head, indeed I imagine that law people, except for those bred to the business, do nothing but bamboozle.

CLATTO, May 14th, 1827.

MY DEAREST JOHN,

This place & what you & William² generously allow me is ample & you must on no account send me more.

You say that you like to be acquainted with our

¹ Secretary to the Governor-General.

² Her second son was also sending her a regular allowance.

JAIPUR

neighbourhood, so I shall begin with St. Andrews, . . . the professors have been changed & doubly changed since you knew it.

General Campbell, whom I believe came since you went, built a fine house near the ruins ; it is called the Priory. He has very bad health, but calls frequently, and Henry is his man of business.

The present Mr. Whyte Melville,¹ who was originally the second son, married a daughter of the late Duke of Leeds, & they have been a great deal in England. This winter, however, they have been at Mount Melville. They visit at Blebo, where Georgina has met with them & likes her. . . .

The oldest of Sir William Fettes' two young relations (the Gordons), he has put into a regiment of Cavalry which is going to India. The youngest, James, was living at Sir William's when I was in Edin^r., so I saw him often & liked him much.

Charlotte has been here with me for some time. She is a cheerful companion & sings away like a lark. Her singing was much thought of during the winter.

The Somervilles all like Charlotte's company very much, but they follow old Philpot's maxim : "Love your neighbours but don't pull down your own hedge."

Doctor William Somerville would even pull down his neighbour's hedge if it suited his purpose.

Henry has got the use of Georgina's thousand pounds left to her by Mr. Mowbray ; poor fellow, Mr. Somerville's share of the Fife Bank comes on him.

May 20th.

By a letter from Edin^r. last night Catherine was better & Susan still going about. I hope Col. Foulis is half-way to India, people here think it was wrong in him to go, but he really convinced me of the necessity of it. He has got himself into great expense by building an addition to his house.

Aleck Deas is to be down from Addiscombe soon.

At this time John had just returned to Jaipur from Delhi, whither he had been unexpectedly

¹ John Whyte Melville of Bennoch and Mount Melville. His only son was Major George Whyte Melville, the novelist.

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summoned. While there he wrote to Charlotte Somerville.

Feb. 22nd, 1827.

MY DEAREST CHARLOTTE,

It seems an age since I either wrote, or heard from you. Our Mother's last letters have particularly noticed your merit under a sad reverse of circumstances. . . .

You appear to have made an excellent purchase of a house, or rather a slice of a house, & I beg therefore that you will oblige me by accepting the enclosed fifty pounds.

If I were a rich man it would have afforded me heartfelt pleasure to have sent a handsome sum instead of this trifle.

This has been an unexpected visit that I have paid to the Imperial City of Hindoostan. I have been much gratified by the examination of its splendid remains. What led to it was the appointment of a deputation of some of the principal Chiefs of Jyepoor, to pay their respects, on the part of the young Rajah, to the Governor-General, who is now making a tour of the Upper Provinces. I was, of course, requested to accompany the Mission & introduce the Chiefs & interpret for them to his Lordship.

The meeting took place with considerable pomp. I wish you could have seen us all—the Chiefs, & I at their head, mounted on elephants, proceeding from the Jyepoor camp to that of the Governor-General, about three miles distant, accompanied by all the troops & elephants, camels, horsemen, tumblers, dancing women, singers, drums, trumpets, etc., usual at Native Courts.

My business here is now over, but Lord Amherst having asked me to stay with him during the fortnight that he will remain here, I shall not leave for some days. At present I am a gentleman at large, a luxury I have not enjoyed for the last sixteen months, & I have enjoyed the last three weeks exceedingly.

His next letters were to his mother, who had again been begging him to reduce the allowance he was making her.

JAIPUR

April 20th, 1827.

. . . I will balance the difference of opinion between us by asking you to go to some expense for purposes of my own.

I want, in the first place, a seal with our arms in full on it. I had one, as you know, left to me by poor William Fettes, but I was unluckily robbed of it along with my watch, at Colombo, on my return from Bourbon. I have also another request—namely to get your own picture at Clatto altered so as to resemble you, but if there should be any demur on that score, pray get a new one put up in place of the present one, which can then be transferred to a lumber room. . . .

William Deas is acting as Qr. M. & Interpreter to his regiment, & getting half the allowance of the appointment.

May 2nd, 1827.

. . . I regret to find that Foulis is coming out again. He has managed very badly unless he finds his chief pleasure on board ship. He ought surely to have known by 1824 what income he required, & if he wanted more, it would surely have been a simpler matter to have remained on for two years & have gone home *permanently*, than to give up his appointment, go home & come out again in 1827.

However it is some satisfaction to think that Susan is not to be brought out to have her liver grilled at Arcot, or some equally hot place.

I am glad that you like Capt. Wemyss¹ as well as you & my dear father liked his father. I know him well, having often met him when he was Flag Lieutenant to Sir Edward Pellew, now Lord Exmouth. When you next see him give him my kind remembrances.

To Susan Foulis he writes :

. . . I have now regularly commenced a second time to make my fortune. I begin to think seriously (& I confess that the thought is not an agreeable one) that I shall never marry.

¹ James Erskine Wemyss, of Wemyss Castle (Rear-Admiral R.N., M.P. 1820-47).

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I shall be too old when I get home to have it in my power to marry in the way I should like—a man who is both poor & old has but a very low place in a young lady's list of eligibles, & to marry anyone not to my taste in every respect—I don't fancy such a change of situation, & am accordingly under the impression that I shall live & die a bachelor.

Peter Cleghorn, of whom the next letters from Clatto are full, had now left India for good, and was living at Wakefield with his four children, the little daughters who had been left for some time at Madras in the charge of his brother John's widow, having joined their brothers. That lady, whom her old father-in-law treated with the greatest kindness, appears from the Cleghorn letters to have been a far from pleasing character.

Of Peter's three unmarried sisters, the one named Jessie was the special Clatto crony.

CLATTO, *June 2nd, 1827.*
MY DEAREST JOHN,

You judge perfectly right in wishing to come home upon eight hundred a year. What is the value of riches if purchased by loss of health & strength: one advice I must give you, do not trust your money to any private individual, but put it in the hands of *John Company*.

I have lived long enough to know that many people have come home to poverty by reason of the agents they employed, who reason with themselves—"It is quite the same to our friend if he gets his interest from us, & there is no fear of the principal in the way we shall buy it out, & to ourselves the advantage will be great."

I am led to these *wise* reflections by our good friend Peter Cleghorn's case. He remitted three thousand to a friend in London, the friend reasoned as above, & now there is not the smallest chance of his ever being able to pay principal or interest.

Peter brought two thousand in his pocket, but thought he would have five to do many things with.

JAIPUR

He, his sister, Mrs. Campbell, & Jessie Cleghorn spent last week here, they stayed two days at Blebo & one at the Manse. Peter is the same fine fellow as ever, but at present his spirits are not as buoyant as they would have been.

Poor Jessie Cleghorn is a sad ruin, she has got a great redness in her face & is extremely thin. Mrs. Campbell looks better than ever.

All this while I was never speaking of Susan & her little boy ; she was delivered of a son—John George—and was doing to a wish, but got a back-going from a fright from a drunken sick nurse.

It is very remarkable that this is the second fright Susan has had by drunken sick nurses.

CLATTO, *Sept. 11th, 1827.*

. . . Peter Cleghorn, I think, has got up his spirits, & the people are busy marrying him, not to one but to several.

Among the happy ones are Charlotte, Catherine, little Cathey & Georgina, & I should think they would now add Miss Jane Davison, Mrs. Captn. Speir's sister, for she is staying at Wakefield & driving about in his droskey, a kind of carriage which I believe you have not yet got in India ; it holds four, & if you drive it by a poney of a certain size you pay no tax, ours was driven by one of that description formerly, but now I have but one horse for all work & it was necessary to have it strong, so they make me pay for the droskey too.

Susan & her family are here at present, delightful creatures, & little John George the most lively happy child I ever saw.

Maria also has a nice little fellow about six weeks old, he is called Robert.¹

They are all to be here on Tuesday the 18th, & it will be quite amusing to see two little squeakers, as Robert Malcolm ² calls them. He came here on his way from the

¹ Robert Bethune (1827-94). Served in the 92nd Gordon Highlanders. Was for seventeen years Adjutant of the Fife battalion of the Black Watch.

² Her eldest nephew who was "studying physic" in Edinburgh.

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Highlands, loaded with grouse. . . . All our people in Edin^r. are fond of him & he is much with them.

Mrs. Bruce has given Georgina & me an invitation to spend three months with her in winter, & I mean to go for three weeks, or perhaps four.

Charlotte is at Gogar Bank, where her company is highly prized, but there is not the smallest chance of Sir William giving either her or any member of the family any solid proof of his friendship.

I fancy he thinks what the ever to be regretted William left Maria & Georgina¹ is quite sufficient.

I am most thankful, however, that Henry is his man of business. No man can do more generous things than he does, only in our wisdom & self-love we should like a little of it directed to those members of our family who would be so much the better for it.

The two Catherines are by way of being at Clatto, but they have been up on a long visit near Hilton, & they soon go to Fotheringham.

It is near dinner time & so I must leave you ; we have the pleasure of your picture on one side of the room & William's on the other, & they are often spoken of during the meal.

On the 23rd of the following month Charlotte Somerville married again ; it must have been a quickly arranged and quiet affair, but it gave great satisfaction to her relations, the bridegroom, John Mill, being an old and intimate friend, and nephew by marriage to Mrs. Bruce.

She had been twenty-three at the time of her first marriage ; she was now forty-three.

With high spirits and a keen sense of humour—although the plainest of a bevy of good-looking sisters—she was the most popular.

No letter announcing the marriage has survived. She wrote to John a month after the wedding.

¹ Young Fettes had left what little money he had at his disposal to his two youngest cousins.

JAIPUR

EDINBURGH, 26th November, 1827.
MY DEAREST BROTHER,

I am quite ashamed when I think that it is a whole month since I received your most kind letter with your magnificent present of 50 pounds.

Receive my warmest thanks, it could never have come at a more seasonable time for I was then busily engaged in buying my marriage cloathes, however I managed to buy them with my own money, & laid out yours for a very handsome lamp for our drawing-room, a thing that would certainly not have been bought by us at this time, but a thing we intended to treat ourselves to bye & bye.

After getting all ready for my marriage I found I had about forty pounds left, so I sent over a painter & got my mother's picture done, & a copy from my father's.

We have got a charming house at the West end of Princes Street, & find it a great comfort being so near our kind friend Mrs. Bruce. You never saw a woman so happy as she is at our marriage. We were to have gone over to Clatto & Blebo about a fortnight ago, but unfortunately Mr. Mill broke a tendon of his leg in dancing a reel with *Mrs. Bruce*, & has been laid on a sofa ever since.

We go to London next month to stay at my kind friends the Murrays. On the way home we visit good old Doctor Somerville & General Elliot.

Susan has taken the house next to us which is truly delightful as we see both her & the dear boys (who are perfect patterns of children) very often. . . .

Meanwhile in India, in consequence of the return of some senior officers to Madras, William Deas lost his troop, and wrote to ask his uncle if he could apply to the Colonel of his regiment, who had been an old friend of his father's.

. . . I should not be so troublesome if I were only concerned for myself, but Hilton sold so ill & there were so many debts to pay off that my mother's income was much reduced two years ago.

This was mentioned to me at the time by my worthy grandfather, who particularly requested me to make it up if possible, & which I have done regularly ever since ~~since hit~~.

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now I don't know how to manage it, & it will be a great annoyance to me as my mother has always been the kindest mother to me.

Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, was just about to conclude his distinguished Indian career, and my grandfather decided to apply to him direct for an appointment for his nephew.

... I declare solemnly that I would not have troubled you if the youth in question had been *merely my nephew*, but I am convinced that he would do honour to your selection by his future conduct.

This part of India is now going on pretty well, & not likely to be seriously disturbed for a long time, unless perhaps Ranjit Singh¹ were to die, when the quarrels of his sons may possibly compel us to take an active part towards securing tranquillity on that frontier.

With my best wishes for your happy meeting with your family at home. . . .

On the reply reaching him, he wrote to Catherine :

... I am now looking out anxiously to learn the decision that may take place in regard to Aleck's destination. If an Infantry Cadetship only be procurable, I entreat you as you value your son's success in life, to *try at least* to have him sent to Bengal, where there are double the number of openings for situations out of the common routine of the Service.

I have received a letter which appears to me very favourable in regard to Sir Thomas Munro's intentions to serve William. He is a man of few words, . . . but the more active appointments, such as Brigade Majors, are not in the gift of the Governor, they belong to the patronage of the Commander-in-Chief.

¹ Maharajah Ranjit Singh (1780-1839). A Sikh leader of military genius who, after recognizing the strength of the British Raj, kept his engagements loyally with the Government.

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Sir Thomas Munro¹ was at this time dead—of cholera, and on reception of the news at Jaipur, John wrote to his successor, Mr. Grame (an old friend), on behalf of his nephew :

... The instances of good fortune that have attended you of late years have, I assure you, given me very great satisfaction.

I sincerely hope that since we last parted (at old Howkin's house it was, at Bangalore) that you have been an altered man in regard to the value placed on the current coin passing through your hands, & I trust that in five or six years time, when I hope to revisit England, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you in the enjoyment of a handsome fortune, & in possession of a handsome landed estate, where I shall certainly lay my account with a good bottle of claret & a hearty welcome, when I come as a quiet, moderately equipped old bachelor to pay you a visit.

I hope we may have a rubber of billiards, *or even rackets* if our limbs be not too stiff by that time of day.

I am quite thrown out of the recreation of music now-a-days, but since I saw you I have had a great deal of it at Calcutta, the Isle of France & other places, & I have added a *little* attainment on the violin-cello to my former practice with the flute, but it is (as the French say) “ *un instrument bien ingrat*,” & requires a great deal of pains.

I am much plagued by an obstinate, perverse, tyranical old Ranee, who takes precious care that my office shall be no sinecure. “ *Adieu, my dear Grame* ”.

On August 30th, he wrote to his mother :

It grieves me much that I shall not be the only sufferer by this unfortunate bank failure. As for myself, it is not the money I grudge, it is the *time*, the extra time I shall in consequence be kept from seeing you & living with you.

Happiness is the search of all, but very few have the same notion as to what it consists in.

So far from being pleased my happiness would be much

¹ General Sir Thomas Munro (1761-1827), Governor of Madras—1820-7. He died on July 6th, just before he should have embarked for England.

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diminished by compliance with your request ; I trust I shall hear no more of it—surely the most sensible plan is not to deprive myself of it ; who knows how long life is to last. Give old John Baird a suit of Sunday clothes out of my next remittance if you like, which will please both you & him.

The death of Sir Thomas Munro is a sad public misfortune, for he was warmly interested in the welfare of the Company's Service, & there was not a single individual who possessed such influence with the Indian Authorities in England. . . .

During all May, June & July I have been plagued with headaches & indigestion & *weight* about the liver.

I accordingly intend applying for leave to visit the snowy mountains next year. . . .

September 20th. . . . I had a long letter from our friend, Hugh Playfair, last night. He has a most lucrative appointment, for he has now a clear £20,000, & some years ago he had nothing. He has thoughts of going home in October, 1828, & seems determined to take up his abode permanently at St. Andrews.

S. E. Low's next letters were from Clatto, the visit to Edinburgh having been postponed :

December 5th, 1827.

. . . By the way, after what you said of your aversion to medicine, you will be not a little surprised at my sending you a dozen boxes of Butler's Aperient Powders, but they are highly recommended & so very pleasant to the taste & in their effects.

I am sure that you will like them & in that case send to me for more. I wrote to Butler yesterday asking if he had any correspondent at Calcutta & Madras, who would get them sent out to Jyepoor & Nagpore, for I mean likewise to send my dear William the same number of boxes. . . .

Jan. 21st, 1828.

. . . I had the happiness to receive yours of July 18th, saying that the next hot season you meant to apply for leave to go where the Governor resides.

I wrote to you about John Baird's death, a faithful good servant he was. I gave Christie, his widow, a pound & a

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suit of mourning from you. I told her she had leave to remain in the house, & I gave her three bolls of meal, three bolls of potatoes, a pig, things out of the garden & a quart of new milk every morning, so that in fact she has little to provide for except tea & snuff, which I believe she can well afford at present.

Poor Mrs. Bayne died last week of a lingering painful illness. I hardly think she has ever been out of the house since her husband's ¹ death two years ago. He left Dura to Mary, to return to the family if she had no children, & has let Rires for a thousand a year to a good tenant. Doctor & Mrs. Macdonald say they have authority to maintain that William is attached to Georgina, but I see no signs of it in his conduct.

I think in all his life he never called a dozen of times, however I daresay if the lady gave encouragement it would be very acceptable, but that she will never do.

William is a wonderful creature, all things considered, but never was there a man of his expectations brought up in such a manner ; he is now between forty & fifty years of age, & has never been further from his own door than Dundee—perhaps a fortnight at Perth with the Yeomanry, & one night in Edinboro' with Peter Cleghorn, who took him to the Play & thought he was to be enchanted, but he looked upon the players as poor performers.

Aleck Deas has not succeeded at Addiscombe, consequently cannot be appointed to either Artillery or Cavalry, but we hope for Cavalry or Infantry. He is dreadfully careless & thoughtless to a degree about money.

It is an unspeakable blessing to have manageable well-disposed children, & that having been my case, I have always been most thankful for it.

I wrote so lately that I thought it almost needless to take a large sheet, but it seems I have filled it, which puts me in mind of some pretty French lines :

“ Pour vous lorsque l'on écrit
En commençant le volume,
Le cœur égare L'esprit,
L'esprit égare la plume.”

¹ Alexander Bayne of Rires and Dura. Mary Bayne of Dura, which was close to Clatto, was married to a Dalgleish, the then laird of Scotsraig.

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Her next was written in Edinburgh :

Feb. 23rd, 1828.

. . . I wrote you a short time ago of our intentions of coming here, but I grieve to say that our dear friend Mrs. Bruce is such an invalid that she is forbid to see any persons. . . .

We are staying with Susan. Catherine has been complaining a good deal, tho' not so as to prevent her going to parties in the evening in a Chair, where to say truth she is much admired. Her complaint is spleen.

She is blessed with a kind affectionate nurse in *little* Catherine.

The agitation she has been kept in about Aleck has been hard upon her, but now that the parting is fairly over I think she will get better.

Aleck could not be sent back to Addiscombe for incorrigible idleness, but Mr. Ravenshaw has most kindly got him a Cadetcy of Infantry in the Bengal Establishment, & Henry set off with him last Monday for London.

Your kindness to me enabled me to give Catherine fifty pounds to help to fit him out.

Charlotte is quite happy in her new situation, Mr. Mill is a stirring character, rather a grave man in general, but well amused with her liveliness.

He is a great contrast from poor Somerville, who was too much for his own interest the life of every company he liked, & as Miss Halkinstone would have said—"My word," he could be as disagreeable where he did not like.

He was tall, handsome & clever, had been his mother's darling, his father's oracle, & spoiled & flattered by the whole family. Such a man was not likely to make an attentive husband ; Mr. Mill, I am persuaded, will always be so.

The Macdonalds are to be at Sir William's the beginning of next month ; we are engaged to a party there on the 7th, to one at Mr. Mill's on the 6th, & to one at Mr. Campbell, Jean Cleghorn's husband, later in the month.

So you see the invitations are for distant days, without which there would be no securing a party ; meanwhile we meet other days without ceremony, either dinner, breakfast or evening.

Sir William & Lady Fettes give us drives to the country almost every day, after which he is commonly set down at

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the New Club (tho' it is of pretty old standing), & there he reads the papers & plays billiards till dinner time, which is sometimes half-past five, sometimes six. My head is confused with the noise & bustle of this town.

In the following month, from Clatto, she writes again :

Peter Cleghorn is for the present either gone to the continent or is going. He has been obliged to give Mrs. John, his sister-in-law, two thousand pounds by some arrangement, & indeed he behaved handsomely to her, tho' I imagine that it was for the same reason that Gil Blas bestowed his charity upon the cripple, whose hat, surrounded by a rosary, was in the middle of the road, ready to receive the donations of the *fidèles effrayés* !

Peter was at this time not lacking in advice from his sagacious old father,¹ who draws a far from flattering picture of his country neighbours.

You are too young & possess too much good sense, talents & habits of business to sink into that most deplorable of characters, a country laird. The advantage of foreign travel would be to you very great, but would afford little chance of bettering your condition, & if you return & settle in Fife, would transubstantiate a system of manners & conversation merely tolerable, into unconquerable disgust.

. . . Your wisest alternative is the resumption of your profession in London. The business of the Privy Council & India Appeals ought to be the branches to which you may direct your attention. . . .

S. E. Low's letter concludes by referring to a marriage which had recently made some stir in Fife. John Bruce, Keeper of the State Paper Office and Historiographer to the East India Company, who had bought the ruins of Falkland Palace

¹ The old man, in an earlier letter, had spoken of being confined to intercourse with "the little minds of little men."

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and the adjoining mansion of Nuthill, had died in the preceding year, leaving everything to his brother's daughter :

Our great Fife heiress, Miss Bruce of Falkland, is married to Mr. Tindall, a London attorney—what a change of fortune for him. She has three hundred thousand pounds. Her uncle, who was King's Printer, bought Falkland from General Moncrieff. I am told she is lively & agreeable, but is of colour & her age above forty. . . . Her uncle was against the marriage, he wished her to marry a man of business. However, she told him she might marry no man of business, but that he would come to be one as soon as he married her. . . .

Before leaving Jaipur for the hills, John Low wrote again to his mother, explaining the rules of the Company with regard to senior officers.

I observe that you are not aware of the rigid rules of the Company's Service. The privilege of remaining at home with rank going on belongs exclusively to those who have obtained the rank of Commandant of a regiment.

Lt.-Colonels, Majors, Captains are *compelled* to declare in two years after reaching England if they mean to retire from the Service or return to it.

If the former, they are struck off the lists, if they resolve on the latter they sometimes, as a favour, are allowed to stay one year or two years more before returning to this country.

Their rank goes on provided *they go back to India* to confirm it.

From these rules the Company *cannot depart by Act of Parliament*.

Three months later he reached his destination :

MUSSOURIE IN THE HIMALAYA MOUNTAINS, 6,700 ft. above the level of the sea. 28th April, 1828.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I ascended from the plains to this delightful cool region about ten days ago, & as the heat had very greatly in-

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creased before I reached the foot of the hills, you will readily suppose that I enjoyed the translation not a little.

I am sitting in a small-sized tent & the thermometer stands at 71, while the purity & lightness of the air is such that one feels as though the temperature was much lower.

My first scheme was to travel at once into the interior of this interesting country, & to have visited in the course of the next month the place where the Governor resides, but on making two or three experiments I found the fatigue (the hills are often so excessively steep that one is obliged to walk & have the hill poneys led) brought back the pain in my liver, & having the kind offer of half a friend's house (Captn. Townsend) to live in during the approaching rainy season, I decided to stay here till September.

By that time the weather will be delightfully fair & cold, & I shall take a couple of months ramble in the mountains before descending to the plains, & include a visit of a few days to the Governor,¹ who lives at a place called Simla.

The scenery all around is very beautiful & imposing—to the South there is a clear view of a well-cultivated valley called Doom, & to the East, North & West a succession of stupendous mountains, tumbling over each other as it were in splendid confusion, while the clouds that generally envelop the higher peaks, from frequently changing density & positions, often show the mountains in fantastic & apparently altered situations.

Then the face of the country is covered with verdure of all sorts; we have the oak, the rhododendron, the fir-tree—all unknown to the plains, & many old acquaintances of the vegetable world, equally strangers to me for 23 years—such as the fern bush, the dog-rose, the barbary, the violet, cowslip, etc.

The sight was truly animating. I may as well mention another advantage—one end of the ridge on which the cottages are built, was fixed upon for sick European soldiers from the Upper Provinces of the Bengal Establishment, & in consequence two medical men always reside here.

¹ Lord Amherst was the first Governor-General to visit Simla.

CHAPTER IV

Two 18th Century Bengal Writers

THE next entry in the letter-book occurs ten months later. It is written at Meerut on February 28th, 1829.

At Mussourie John had been thrown into contact with the Judge of Bareilly and his family, who were spending some months in the hills, and in William Dick's sister-in-law he found the long-despaired-of "young lady to his taste in every respect" who, in spite of twenty-one years of difference of age, did not find him too old for a husband.

A very long letter to Mrs. Low announcing my engagement to Miss Shakespear. My marriage must necessarily retard my arrival at Clatto, but she and my sisters will feel reconciled to this when they reflect that I shall be so much happier in the meantime.

Her advent into his life was indeed to delay his return for many years, but from that time onwards he carried with him an uninterrupted happy home life in all the stations which he occupied.

Hitherto he had been mainly associated with fellow Scotchmen who at this time were represented in India in far greater numbers than their countrymen south of the Tweed : he was now to be closely connected with two English families

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which for two generations had held high administrative posts in India, while the young folk of the third were beginning to pour into the country. His later correspondence abounds in references to his young wife's relations, and in linking up with an earlier era in the long-drawn-out work of conquest and consolidation of our Indian Empire, some account of her forbears may be of interest.

Augusta Shakespear was the daughter of John Talbot Shakespear, Bengal Civil Service, and Emily, daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray. This William Thackeray (1749-1813), grandfather of the novelist, was the sixteenth and youngest child of Dr. Thomas Thackeray, D.D., headmaster of Harrow, and his widowed mother secured for him a nomination as a Writer in the East India Company's service in Bengal. Twelve months after his arrival, Augusta's other grandfather, John Shakespear, born in the same year and destined for the same service, set foot in India. He had left behind him an equally happy home, and was likewise the first member of his family to embark for the East. The Shakespear family had been prosperous City folk for some generations. The first known ancestor was one "John Shakespear, Roapemake" of Shakespear's Walk, Shadwell, born *circa* 1619.¹ He was a sturdy fellow whose life extended into four reigns including the Commonwealth. Under the second Charles the family narrowly missed extinction, all his four children (three had previously died in infancy) being swept off by the Plague, he and his wife, however, surviving to become the parents of yet another seven.

¹ His body was interred at Shadwell in 1689.

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For over three centuries the family cherished the belief that they were descended from Thomas Shakespear, an uncle of the poet, whose son John, there is good reason to believe, moved to London and became the King's bit-maker in the parish of St. Clement Danes, but as the most painstaking recent research¹ has failed to trace the missing link, it must remain unproven. The second generation moved to Stepney Causeway, then a fashionable mercantile locality, and the head of the third, a wealthy man, became Mr. Alderman Shakespear and Master of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers.

From that time onwards the younger sons forsook business for other professions, the Indian Civil Service and Army absorbing the greater number. But the rope-making business and the old mansion in Stepney remained in the possession of successive heads of the family for close on two hundred years. It was the second building on the site belonging to the Shakespear family, and was built about 1750. It still stands in its present mean and crowded neighbourhood, and all who can afford to pay ninepence can secure a lodgings there for the night. From its description (as already a back-number) in a novel written over seventy years ago it must have been a pleasant home from which the budding Writer parted in the winter of 1766.²

We are standing on the doorstep of that house which was once tenanted by Alderman Shakespear . . . It is a

¹ This was undertaken by my father.

² *The Race for Wealth*, written in 1866 by Mrs. J. H. Riddell, who was born in a house which was almost opposite.

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delicious house, so peaceful, so unlike anything one would look for in such a neighbourhood.

The authoress speaks, too, of a large window which in earlier days had looked on to "a pleasant garden well stocked with fruit, and beyond it a small paddock, now covered by Dorset Street." John Shakespear¹ was the second of the Alderman's family of fourteen children, and at the age of seventeen, on obtaining a certificate from a Mr. Jos. Smithers of Lothbury as having been duly instructed in "Merchant's Accomts after the Italian Manner," he wrote out his humble petition to the Directors of the United East India Company to be "admitted as a Writer at one of their settlements in the East Indies," which still exists at the India Office, signed in a round schoolboy hand. One can imagine in what a state of tearful excitement his mother and many brethren must have been when the lad and his father entered the coach for the wharf at Ratcliffe Stairs, from whence they proceeded by wherry to Gravesend, off which the fleet of East Indiamen lay.

Not long after his arrival in Calcutta—some six months after Lord Clive had left India for good—he was closely associated with William Thackeray, both young men being appointed Assistants to Mr. Harry Verelst, the succeeding President and Governor, and they were subsequently again together for two years at Dacca. Both were

¹ His eldest brother, Arthur Shakespear, carried on the business but never lived in the old house on the "Causey," preferring Mayfair. He married Jane, sister of Sir Mathew White Ridley, Bart. He was M.P. for Richmond, 1802-12, and was well known in the racing world.

The only other member of this generation to go to India was the Alderman's twelfth child, Colin, of whom more below.

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destined to come into close and friendly touch with Warren Hastings.

A few years before he left India, William Thackeray became the focus of excitement in Bengal through an affair which gained for him the soubriquet of "Sylhet Thackeray." During this period the salaries paid by the Company to their servants were niggardly in the extreme, but private trade was not merely condoned, but encouraged, so that survivors were frequently able to retire after nine or ten years of service with considerable fortunes.¹

The region of Sylhet, to which Thackeray was appointed as the Company's first Agent, abounded in wild elephants which were regularly hunted, and in 1774 he contracted to supply the Company with sixty-six of these animals which had been caught in the preceding year.

Sixty of their number reached Patna safely and were duly taken over by the appointed agents, and his responsibilities in the matter were at an end.

Nothing further appears on the subject in the Company's records until 1776, when his claim for the balance of payment due to him was resisted on the ground that only sixteen elephants had survived the journey from Patna to Belgaum, their eventual destination. The matter was brought up before the Supreme Council,² and the Governor, Warren Hastings, in an impartial survey of the facts, decided in favour of the claim, in which he was supported by his friend and ally,

¹ A competent observer, Captain James Rennell, Thackeray's brother-in-law, computed that in the eighteenth century "Scarce one out of seventy men returns to his native country."

² A full account of this affair is given in *Sylhet Thackeray*, by Mr. Bradley Birt.

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Richard Barwell. This, however, was enough to ensure the bitter hostility of the other three members, Sir Philip Francis, General Clavering and Colonel John Monson. The majority of one carried the day, and eventually, very reluctantly, Thackeray took the case to the Supreme Court, which gave a verdict in his favour, and he received the amount due (Rupees 29,000) with costs.

The affair had been complicated by his steadfast refusal to give the name of his partner in the transaction, which he declared to be a private matter.

Farringdon¹ states in his *Diary* that he met Mr. Thackeray at the house of Mr. Barroneau, in 1806, and that the former then told him that his partner in the elephant deal had been Mr. Barwell, which throws light upon a matter otherwise obscure, for Barwell, as Member of Council, was debarred from a share in such a contract, and if the other members had succeeded in extracting this information, it might have resulted in his recall.

Thackeray's marriage to Amelia, second daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Richmond Webb of the 32nd Foot, took place in Calcutta shortly after he had won his case.

Colonel Webb was of the same family as General John Richmond Webb, one of Marlborough's divisional generals, and he himself had commanded a company at Culloden. He was an impetuous, hot-tempered, though affectionate man, and from very racy letters of his which have

¹ *Farringdon Diary*, Vol. III, p. 278. Barwell at the time of the transaction was not yet a Member of the new Supreme Council, being still Chief of Council at Dacca.

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survived, it appears that he had succeeded through his wife to an encumbered estate, and was in a perennially hard-up condition. He had influential friends, both at Madras and Calcutta, and his eldest daughter was the pioneer, coming out to India on a visit, just as any modern girl might do.

The Court of Directors¹ allowed no one of either sex to enter the country without a permit, and in the records of the India Office stands the entry that on the 27th November, 1771—"It is ordered that Sarah Webb have leave to proceed to her friends in Bengal."

On her speedy marriage to Mr. Peter Moore, a rising young Bengal Writer, her father exported his three remaining daughters, who had just returned from a school in France.

They were all very young—the youngest a child of fifteen. The arrival of a vessel bringing a cargo of fair ones from overseas was an event of considerable importance in the India of earlier days; some sixty years later one of Amelia Webb's grandsons commemorated in verse the excitement produced in "the young bachelors scattered up & down the land" at the disembarkation of such a precious freight.

To the two elder Webb girls India brought happiness. Amelia especially was ideally happy in her marriage, and William Thackeray having accumulated a sufficient fortune, the couple sailed for home in January, 1777, a year after the wedding.

For the other sisters fate had no good gifts in store. The younger of the two married a Writer

¹ Their supervision was strict, and undesirable visitors found themselves liable to be deported.

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of the name of Evans, but the relations between her husband and herself, already not too happy, became, after her first return to England, strained past recovery. She had driven to the home of her husband's parents by night ; in the morning, on rising early, her nostrils were assailed by unaccustomed odours—emanating from the ground floor, which proved, in fact, to be a grocer's shop ! She never forgave her husband for his want of candour, and many years of ill-assorted and unhappy companionship ended in a judicial separation.

The lot of Charlotte, the remaining sister, was sadder still, and from a passage in one of Sarah Moore's letters to her "Sister Thackeray," she appears to have been capricious and unstable from the first. (She had already discarded two importunate suitors.)

... Auriol,¹ of late pays her a very great & constant attention which she seems to receive with great pleasure, for which reason we promote it all we can by agreeing to all his parties ; . . . he seems the most calculated to make her happy ; & must, I think with the *Prudence* he possesses, go home with an easy fortune in four or five years. . . .

I verily believe she likes him ; upon my asking Augusta [the future Mrs. Evans] what she thought of it she replied —that it would be just according to the humour Charlotte would happen to be in.

"Had he asked her when she first arrived," said Augusta, "she would have accepted him—had he asked her a month ago she would have refused him, & were he to ask her now, she would gladly marry him."

¹ James Auriol, Secretary to the Council. (A fine picture painted at this time by Zoffany of the Auriol family was lent by Mr. M. G. Dashwood to the exhibition of English Conversation Pieces in March, 1930.)

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No details of the poor girl's subsequent career are known, but there are veiled allusions to some tragic love affair in a despairing letter addressed four years later by her mother to Warren Hastings, to whose kind heart no appeal was ever made in vain.

London High Street,
MARYLEBONE.

Decr. 20th, 1781.

SIR,

Distracted with the sufferings of our dear beloved as unfortunate daughter Charlotte Webb, I hope will plead my excuse for the liberty in thus addressing you on her behalf. Apprehending Mr. Evans may possibly be absent from Calcutta, or fearing any other accident should put it out of his power to convey our dear Child to England, in compliance to most earnest & repeated requests.

If therefore she is not already on her passage home, I beg & implore that you Sir, will have the great goodness . . . to have her conveyed home with all possible speed & safety, which shall ever be esteemed as the greatest obligation, which favor I should never have presumed to ask but that urgent necessity prompts me to it ; the miserys she has already suffered & the great loss of time past, owing to *Mrs. Moore's imprudence in keeping her summer after summer since her first illness* which has perhaps rendered all our future endeavours to *recover her* Lost, these Dreadful considerations together with their completing her Tragedy by a vile Sham Marriage, all which shocking events make her poor father & I really fear that *even Murder* may be the next cruel scene with which we may be presented.

Our troubles & reflections are of the bitterest kind, that so *good* so fine a girl should meet with such a load of woe, for, if there are Truth Innocence & Honor in the humane Breast, our dear Charlotte Webb had her *full* portion, *such* was her character from her Infancy while In England —but that fatal period in which I unhappily suffered her to depart from under the protection of her parents has Ruin'd her & I am the innocent cause, for which I shall never forgive myself.

Pardon Sir my thus trespassing on your time & patience,

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but I trust your humanity will consider this comes from an unhappy mother, who weeps over every line as she writes, so full is my heart of sorrow for my dear Charlotte that I am almost frantic. . . .

I have the Honor to be

Sir

Your most obliged &

Most humble Servant

SARAH WEBB.¹

Charlotte Webb was, however, already at sea, but although she lived for twenty-one years after her return, she never recovered her reason. William and Amelia Thackeray settled at Hadley Green, Middlesex, a charming, peaceful place within easy reach of London, where their family of seven sons and four daughters were born and reared. They were surrounded by relations, and Peter Moore, who retired from India as a rich man at the age of thirty-three—the live wire of the family group, became Lord of the Manor of Hadley. An ambitious man, full of life and vigour, he was prominent in political and financial circles, and was member for Coventry in five successive Parliaments.

The brothers-in-law must have held strongly conflicting opinions at the time of the trial of Hastings, for Moore owed his appointment in the Company's Service to Lord Holland, which attached him to the Whig leaders, and he consequently took the side of Burke and Sheridan ² in the long contest. Unfortunately he became involved in many of the public ventures of the day,

¹ Exact transcription from the original at the Brit. Museum (Addl. MSS. No. 29, 152, Fol. 119).

² It was from his London house that the body of Sheridan was carried to Westminster Abbey.

and eventually left England to avoid a debtor's prison. He died as an exile at Abbeville in 1828. Unlike Moore, Thackeray was a man of homely tastes, modest and retiring ; he spoke little of his early adventurous days, working happily in his garden and active in all local good works.

But the happy home became too cramped for the many nestlings, and one by one they took their flight.

The history of this generation of the Thackeray family¹ is typical of the holocaust of young lives laid down in the consolidation of our Indian possessions. If devotion to duty and the love of adventure, which has always responded to the lure of the East, bring happiness, then their lives were undoubtedly as happy as they were short. None of the six sons who went to India lived to return—all except one died unmarried.

Four were Writers, three in the Madras and one in the Bengal Establishment. William, the eldest, who reached Madras in 1778, was the only one to enjoy a home furlough. He served under Sir Thomas Munro in the settlement of the territories ceded by the Nizam. They spent their days in the saddle, without escort—(Munro's dictum being that "by the absence of guards we get much sooner acquainted with the people"), introducing order, and inaugurating a fair system of collecting revenue in place of extortion at the sword's point, or by torture.

After twenty-four years of service he was appointed a Member of the Madras Council, but his health was undermined by malaria, and he

¹ The details of their careers are given in full in Sir William Hunter's *The Thackerays in India*.

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embarked too late for the Cape, dying at sea at the age of forty-four.

The next four brothers died between the ages of nineteen and thirty-five, two from the results of fever and two in action.

One of these, the only soldier of the family, Thomas Thackeray, was killed in an unsuccessful attack on a stockade, when he and his light company of the 26th Native Infantry sacrificed themselves to cover the retreat of their comrades, and the other, St. John, was shot dead in October, 1824, at the Fort of Kittur while advancing under a flag of truce in an endeavour to save unnecessary bloodshed.

The longest life was that of Charles, the youngest of the sons to go to India. In extreme youth considered the most brilliant, he was the only one who was not a credit to his family. He was a Barrister-at-Law of the Inner Temple, and went to Calcutta to practise, but devoted most of his time to writing, being at one time associated with John Peter Grant and John Farley Leith as leader writers for the *Englishman*.

In family records he is described as being "full of wit and talent, handsome and agreeable," but he fell a victim to drink, a not uncommon occurrence in India at that time. He survived all his brothers by a generation, living on miserably in Calcutta until 1846. It was owing to Richmond, the second son, that Emily Thackeray sailed for India. He had received his nomination as a Writer soon after leaving Eton. His first letter to his mother on landing at Madras in February, 1799, as a lad of seventeen, makes pathetic reading. He was disappointed that he

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was not met by his elder brother, and pictures his mother's "routs" taking place at home and his father digging in the garden.

... It is intensely hot and I am obliged to go out in the sun. There are no palanquins here for the bearers are all gone with the Army which has taken the field ... I would give anything to be at home ; I would even be glad to carry gravel on my shoulder in the garden. It was this time last year we made the new walk ; it will be wonderfully altered when I see it again. I am very much out of spirits at not seeing William here, and if he cannot get leave in a few days I shall go to him. I hope Emily won't forget her journals etc., as the greatest pleasure *here* is hearing from our friends ... I am almost certain that my dear father's complaint was the liver, and if it ever returns, which God forbid, pray try Mercury : in this country it is the only cure. I have had it, I am sorry to say, and indeed was not thoroughly cured. God bless you, my dear Mater, and preserve you from all sickness is the constant prayer of your most affectionate son,

R. THACKERAY.

To his sister, Emily, he was specially devoted, and three years later he wrote the fateful letter, in which haste and eagerness account in some measure for spelling and punctuation surprising even for that period !

I sit down to give you a short acct. of Tom and myself, for to tell you the truth I am fagging extremely hard at Arabic and Persian : shall have very little time for this twelve month for by the end of this year I hope the foundations of my fortune will be laid in almost as lucrative a manner as William's : you must long ago have heard of his appt. I think it the best possible Collector-Judge etc. the Marquis¹ has established a College here and gave me with some others the option of staying or not, while all young hands were obliged to enter.

I enter'd merely to make myself conspicuous as I

¹ Marquis Wellesley, Governor-General, 1798-1805.

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had been very hardly used, and had no opportunity of trying for those prizes wh. were given to the young men at the presidency. I received many very entertaining letters from the family in a box from Mr. Aston but was sorry to observe you were not quite so kind as usual as there was but one short one from you and pater : I beg you will send me no more boots or shoes : as I never wear them and have now a stock of at least 20 pairs I always wear country, and as I seldom go out, don't care two pence about um, for I really believe I am the greatest quiz in Calcutta.

The Company I am sorry to say have clipped about one fourth of my salary for the college about £165 which makes me very indignant as I had thoughts of beginning to realize wh. now will be impossible till I leave College : the best five are to leave in December and I am pushing to be one but am rather alarmed as there are some who are good scholars and have been 5 and 6 years in the country . . .

By the way the little ones write and improve so much that I really at first gave the credit of their letters to Augusta and Charlotte, if I can get out of Collige by next December I have no doubt I shall immediately receive 4 times my present salary when if Emily has a mind to cross the waters I shall be able to receive her and I believe she ought to remember that there is no one beside you and my dearest Pater who can or has more love for her than I have.

I trust my dearest Mater you will know I *cannot* say this for mere form and though perhaps I speak plain I write what I feel.

Indeed I think her coming out the most elegible thing in the world not only for herself but for our sisters for girls who are well brought up I think are equally as certain of marrying well as young men of good abilities are of coming on . . .

I don't believe you will be able to 'read this elegant epistle, after reading it over I realy am almost ashamed to send it however I will write a better by the *Lady Jane Dundas*.

God bless and preserve you my dearest Mater prays your affectionate son

RICHMOND THACKERAY.

Emily did not sail alone ; the parents decided to send their second daughter with her. The two girls embarked at the Downs on the East Indiaman—the *United Kingdom*—in March, 1802, two years before the elder one's future son-in-law, John Low (whom, however, she was never to see), left his native shores. Emily was twenty-two, and Augusta five years younger. Their father came to see them off and to make the acquaintance of the Captain of the vessel on whom so much depended. The position of these men was one of omnipotence, not only in regard to the command of their vessels, but in all matters pertaining to the passengers, who were in fact their paying-guests. Very large sums found their way to their pockets, a "slip," measuring 14 ft. by 6 ft., partitioned in solid oak and fitted with a door, in the "Round House" or "Great Cabin," costing at least £250.

An article in the *Calcutta Review* of October, 1889, entitled "The Voyage to India in the Eighteenth Century," by F. H. Skrine, I.C.S., gives a good idea of the status of the Captains of these old East Indiamen.

In the following passage the writer quotes from a curious old guide book, the *East India Vade Mecum* :

... Tiberius in receipt of divine honours from the Roman Senate, Alexander entering Babylon in triumph, Louis the 14th giving audience to a successful general in the Gallery of Mirrors—to these and these alone must our skipper be compared.

Wealthy, almost beyond dreams of avarice, the repository of unquestioned authority over every soul on board, ex-officio guardian to unruly Writers and Cadets, courted by all from the Member of Council to the powder

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monkey, the Captain's position was one which men of a far higher social position might well have envied.

To his responsibilities must be added the guardianship of young ladies proceeding to the East, an onerous task, especially in days when the prospect of a duel—arranged to take place between decks—was a not unlikely occurrence.

The Thackeray sisters were fortunate in possessing two friends on board—one of them the wife of the Collector of Behar, who was rejoining her husband. The parting with their father was an affecting one, and man-like, he had no wish to prolong the agony. After being put on shore, he wrote the following letter :

March 11th, 1802.

MY DEAREST GIRLS,

I know not what more to say, but as we must part I think it best I should return to your good Mother, & my heart will be more at ease, for I can be of no further use to you. If I could I would stay with pleasure, but it will only make us more uneasy. I leave you, thank God, better than I could have expected.

I am happy beyond measure at the thought of your having so truly good & amiable a friend as Mrs. Ricketts. . . . Follow her good advice & example. I like your Captain much, & I like our good friend, Mr. Darrall, who has promised to be very kind & attentive.

I like all the ship passengers, & really am more easy when I reflect upon the happy prospect of a pleasant voyage . . .

May health & happiness be your lot. Write by every opportunity, We shall soon meet again.

Ever my dearest girls' most affectionate father

W. M. THACKERAY.

It was well for the affectionate father's peace of mind that he left when he did. Emily, however, seems to have been a sensible young lady. Four days later she wrote :

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Ship *United Kingdom*, 15th March, 1802.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

About two hours since I wrote a few lines thinking that the pilot was then going off, but we have just received a piece of intelligence which concerns me because it will, I fear, give you and my dear mother some uneasiness.

It is that *Captain Bulloch* is going to *leave the ship*. You may conceive how great our surprise was, he never gave the least hint of his intention until about an hour since, when he called Mrs. Ricketts up and told her that he must go, that something had occurred at Deal, that he should be the most miserable of men, and that he could not long hold up if he was to go on with us.

Mrs. Ricketts hesitated at first whether to return or not, but Mr. Darrell said he should go on with the ship and thinks we should do just as well without the Captn., for Mr. Campbell, the First Officer, is an experienced sailor and bears a most excellent character.

On our own account I feel perfectly easy ; Mrs. Ricketts will be our guide in everything, we shall entirely depend upon her advice, and Mr. Darrell has promised to be our protector if we should want one, and as for our own conduct I am sure you know us well enough to depend upon that, I have no doubt but that we shall all go on perfectly happy and well.

Captn. Bulloch has only been on board one day, his conduct is unaccountable. He has promised to return one fourth of the passage money to you. I entreat that my dearest Father and Mother will not suffer themselves to be made uneasy on this account, if there was the least occasion for it we should have returned.

We shall keep much in our cabins where we can always amuse ourselves. I thought it better to write a few lines to you although I can give no account for this sudden affair. Perhaps Captn. Bulloch may account to you for his conduct. We are quite well & the vessel is delightful.

I have not time to add more than to pray that you & our dearest Mother will take care of yourselves & once more to beg that you will be happy about us, & believe me,

My dearest Father

Your most affecte

Daughter

EMILY THACKERAY.

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Such a desertion was an unheard-of occurrence. The reason for it was never known. When brought before the Court of Directors, Captain Bulloch refused to give any explanation, and was dismissed the Company's service.

The trust reposed by the passengers in the Second Officer was justified, and the *United Kingdom* reached Calcutta by the end of July after an unusually quick passage.

Shakespear, who had risen to be Chief of Council at Dacca, did not leave India until December, 1780. Having retired four years later than Thackeray, he returned with a considerably larger fortune. Unlike him, he left as a bachelor.

The manner of his return was somewhat dramatic. When he embarked in the *Walpole*, one of four East Indiamen sailing home in company, he was entrusted by Hastings with an important document for delivery to Mr. Sullivan, the Chairman of the Court of Directors.

The matter concerned the decision of Hastings to put an end to the incessant disputes in progress between the Supreme Court and the principal of the Company's Courts—the Sudder Diwani—by placing both in charge of the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey.

Sir Philip Francis, in ill-health, not having yet recovered from the effects of his duel with Hastings, was on the *Fox*, another vessel of the fleet, desperately anxious to reach England in order to forge ahead in his campaign of misrepresentation.

But when the ships put in at St. Helena, Shakespear gave him the slip, dispatching the following letter to the Governor-General before leaving the island :

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March 29th, 1781.

. . . A Dutch ship having put in here to repaire a leak, I have determined on proceeding with her to Europe as a circumstance that would be agreeable to you. We sail tomorrow, & it is only to-day known to the Franciscan that I am going. He has prepared letters, but does not despatch any particular person. I possess a copy of your letter to the Directors, which, if Mr. Sullivan approves, I purpose delivering as a *duplicate*, but this will depend upon the situation of things when I arrive. I am hopeful that my going on before may be beneficial; there is no knowing when the Bengal ships will get from hence. All the news here is of an old date, but it is still unfavourable to the English.

Five outward-bound Indiamen & fifty transports have been taken by the combined fleets off Cape Finisterre. . . .

It is fortunate that I have copies of most of your consequential papers for the information of your friends, & I trust I shall reach England with them safe, notwithstanding I must go to Holland, & probably may be *overhauled* by every Frenchman we meet—but I have taken precautions for securing my papers. . . .

I sincerely hope your good health & spirits may continue & that this will find Mrs. Hastings perfectly well. I entreat you will make my best wishes acceptable to her, & that you will believe me undeviatingly, your attached & most affectionate, obliged servant, ever

J. SHAKESPEAR.

Francis must have gnashed his teeth over this affair, for the Bengal ships “did not get from hence” until four months later.

The faithful messenger only gained his purpose by a stroke of luck; all unaware he had embarked on an enemy vessel, for the news that England and Holland had been at war for three months had not reached St. Helena. Fortunately the Dutchman was captured by an English frigate, which landed him at Plymouth on June 26th, as otherwise he would have been interned as a prisoner of

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war in Holland. The episode played no important part in the struggle between the two redoubtable opponents, although Francis made much of the advantage gained by Hastings through the delivery of the papers five months in advance of the official dispatch. He gained the first round, and the system introduced by Hastings, for the inauguration of which his enemy attributed the most unworthy motives, was discontinued, and Sir Elijah Impey recalled. In 1782, the year after his return, John Shakespear married Mary, daughter of the Rev. William Davenport, and Martha Talbot, his first cousin, the heiress of John Ivory Talbot of Laycock Abbey, Wiltshire. William Davenport had died in the preceding year, leaving also a son, who assumed the name of Talbot, and a younger daughter named Barbara.

Mary, like most young ladies of her period, kept a journal,¹ which she labelled—" My Memorandum Book, given me by my dear Mother Davenport." On the death of her grandfather, she records :

" My father's family removed from Bredon in Worcestershire & took possession of the Laycock estate, July the 5th, 1779.

This lovely old place ² was founded in 1232 as a Nunnery, and was granted at the Reformation to Sir William Sharrington, passing by marriage to a branch of the Talbot family.

The entries in Mary Davenport's journal reveal an affectionate and simple personality, and a miniature of her in my possession shows a charm-

¹ In the possession of her great-granddaughter, Miss A. M. Thackeray.

² By the courtesy of Miss Talbot, the present owner, it is open to the public on certain days.

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ing face, with large brown eyes, and powdered hair piled high in curls.

She kept her journal faithfully during her ten years of married life :

My dear Shakespear returned to England after 15 years in the East Indies on 23rd June, 1781. He quitted England Decbr. 24th, 1766.

We were married at Laycock Church by the Revd. Doctor Popham, May the 8th, 1782.

My dr. Mother, Will Talbot, Bab, Mary Shakespear & Mansel Talbot present at the ceremony.

She went to her mother's house in Bath—some ten miles distant—for the birth of her first child.

April the 15th, 1783. My dear little boy John Talbot was born in the Circus Bath.

June the 4th. He was christened by Dr. Popham in the Church at Laycock. The sponsors, my mother & Mr. Shakespear's mother, Mr. Mansel Talbot & Arthur Shakespear. Eighteen beds made up on this occasion at the Abbey.

John Shakespear, who never left England again, bought a property in Hampshire, Brookwood House, near Bramdean, in 1784.

His friendship with Warren Hastings continued unbroken, and a marble bust of "The Immortal Bard," given to him by the latter, remains a cherished heirloom in the family.

Four happy years were spent at Brookwood, but he had a passion for horses, and was a convivial fellow, who lived generously and kept open house, so that from his recollections of this period (embodied years later in Memoirs written by his youngest son) it is not surprising that the expenses proved excessive.

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The Prince of Wales used, in early life, to hunt a great deal. He resided at Kempshott Park, near Basingstoke. . . . When my father lived at Brookwood, the hounds having killed close by, His Royal Highness said that he would have some luncheon. He was very fond of broils . . . he began standing near the table, then someone put a chair very close & he sat down.

Cherry brandy etc. went about quick, then claret, & the party did not break up till morning.

A chaise & four was sent for to take the Prince home.

The place was accordingly sold, and his wife's record of the removal to a much smaller house is rather wistful :

We parted with our house & estate at Brookwood, January 20th, 1789, having lived in it for four years very comfortably. Our family removed to Twyford Lodge, in Hampshire, where I trust in God we are settled for life.

It was her last home, but for her husband only the first of the removals with which his existence was punctuated.

He even contemplated embarking on another spell in India at the age of sixty-two, no doubt inspired by the wish to replenish a diminished exchequer !

He stood for the East India Direction, with the influence of the Prince of Wales to back him, but was beaten.

Some years after, when Lord Moira went out as Governor-General, & the Prince had, as he thought, great power, he appointed my father to a situation in Bengal worth £10,000 a year, but Lord Liverpool, then Prime Minister, insisted on the right of Government to appoint.

Mary's journal records the birth of four more "dear little boys"—William, Henry, Arthur and George Shakespear, and the death of the last.

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April the 29th, 1790, I lost my ever dear & valuable mother. She departed this life in the seventy-fifth year of her age her memory ever to be respected as the best of parents.

She was interred with my father in Laycock vault.

My sister purchased a lease of her house in Brook Street, Grosvenor Square.

March the 10th, 1793, spent two months with my sister in an ill state of health.

This is almost the last entry. On the 30th November she gave birth to a daughter¹ and died in the following month, her body being laid beside those of her parents in Lacock vault.

Four years later John Shakespear married a second time, and again very happily. The lady proved a kind stepmother, but the time was approaching for the three elder lads to bid farewell to England's green and pleasant land. Like their contemporaries, the young Thackerays, they were to live their lives and meet their deaths in the East, but survived, all three, long enough to rise to high and responsible positions, and to leave large families, who in their turn sought their careers in India.

John Talbot and William Shakespear² sailed as Writers in 1800, the former for Bengal, the latter for Madras.

The third son, Henry,³ was still at Harrow, but he followed his eldest brother to Bengal two years

¹ Mary Anne Shakespear, 1793-1850, wife of the Rev. Francis Thackeray, seventh and youngest son of William and Amelia Thackeray, of whom more below.

² William Oliver Shakespear, 1784-1838. Died as First Judge of the Provincial Court, Western Division, Madras.

³ Henry Davenport Shakespear, 1786-1838. Died as third Member of the Supreme Council, Calcutta.

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later, from which time their careers were unusually closely interwoven.

Young John Shakespear had been for two years at the Company's College ¹ at Fort William when the Thackeray sisters reached Calcutta. He had become friendly with their brother, Richmond, and the introduction took place soon after.

Emily, by all accounts, was a very lovely girl, Augusta, taller, handsome and stately. He lost his heart to the former. To her friends it must have seemed a most imprudent affair. The boy was only twenty, two years her junior, and he had as yet no appointment, having only just left college. But it was, and remained, a love marriage to the end of the chapter. The wedding took place at St. John's Church, then the cathedral of Calcutta, on 28th March, 1803, nine months to a day from the date of the bride's arrival in Diamond Harbour.

¹ Every young Writer had to spend a year or more at the College studying oriental languages, etc. Although still graded as Writers, Factors, Junior and Senior Merchants, at this period they no longer had any connection with commerce, their duties being entirely administrative and judicial.

CHAPTER V

The Shakespear and Thackeray Families, 1807-1827

ALMOST immediately after the wedding young John Shakespear was made Assistant to his brother-in-law, who was in charge of the frontier district of Birbhum in Lower Bengal, from which time onwards his promotion was rapid.

Richmond himself did not marry until he was twenty-nine. From 1807, when he was appointed Secretary to the Board of Revenue, until his death, he remained in the capital or its precincts, and on October 13th, 1810, his marriage took place to Anne Becher, one of Calcutta's reigning beauties.

His only child, the future novelist, was born on the 18th July of the following year, and christened William Makepeace after his grandfather.

John and Emily Shakespear were by this time the parents of five children, and two years later the three eldest,¹ Emily, John and William, were sent to England, consigned to their paternal grandfather's care.

The happy family home at Hadley Green, in earlier days so teeming with young life, was no more. Amelia Thackeray had passed away in

¹ Emily Anne Shakespear (1804-87), wife of Wm. Fleming Dick. John Dowdeswell Shakespear (1806-67), Bengal Artillery. William Makepeace Shakespear (1807-35), Bengal Artillery.

1810 at the age of fifty-two. The news of her son Webb's death in India at nineteen, within a year of reaching India, was a blow from which she never recovered. Her husband survived her, but mercifully did not live long enough to hear of the rapid succession of family deaths. He had still four children in England.

"I had much rather have you all back," he wrote to his daughter Augusta, "than send any more children away." The two youngest sons, Francis¹ and Charles,² were sent to Cambridge. Charlotte,³ the elder of the two remaining girls, was the prop and solace of her parents' declining years, and stood in a relationship almost maternal to a little sister⁴ eleven years her junior.

William Thackeray died in March, 1813, while his three grandchildren were at sea.

Old John Shakespear meanwhile, very hale and hearty, had been living in Sussex since his second marriage. Of his life there, his son Arthur, always greatly devoted to his father, wrote out a few reminiscences in his *Memoirs*.

My father lived at Singleton in Sussex, very near to the Duke of Richmond's, Goodwood Park. He (the Duke) was very kind to me and often mounted me with his hounds.

My father hunted regularly with them. Colonel Lennox, the Duke's nephew, afterwards Duke of Richmond,

¹ The Rev. Francis Thackeray (1793-1842), a cultured man of quiet tastes, who wrote a *History of the Earl of Chatham* and other books.

² Charles Thackeray (1794-1846), the epitome of whose career has been given.

³ Charlotte (1786-1824), wife of John Ritchie.

⁴ Sarah Jane Henrietta, wife of Robert Langslow, Attorney-General in Malta and later in Ceylon.

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lent me one of his best hunters for the whole of the Christmas holidays one year. . . .

My father was the life of the hunt ; places were named after him, a centre in the Red Copse on the Duke's property, "The Shakespear Gallery."

This son, who never saw India, played a large part in the lives of his brother's children. After spending eight years at Harrow, his education was completed at home.

In 1807-8 I used to go to Mr. Bayton, a clergyman, two miles from Singleton to read—not to much purpose ; the stable, I am ashamed to say, was my delight.

In the latter year he obtained a Cornetcy in the 2nd Dragoon Guards, and notes that when a general order came for the men to cut off their pig-tails—"Many were very indignant and turned them up. Officers wore powder and false pig-tails to the waist." Twelve months later he exchanged into the 3rd Dragoons.

At the time of the children's arrival in England, Arthur was fighting in the Peninsular War. In July, 1811, while serving as A.D.C. to the Duke of Richmond (the Colonel Lennox of his childhood)—then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he was summoned to join his regiment, which disembarked at Lisbon in August.

Before taking up the Dublin appointment, he had the curious experience of acting as second in a duel which took place in a gravel-pit at Wimbledon Common, while the public coach drew up on the Portsmouth Road, and provided interested spectators !

In May, 1812, he was made A.D.C. to Sir Stapleton Cotton, and early in 1814 he recounts

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an incident which he considered as a great stroke of luck. The Commander-in-Chief had come over to inspect the outpost line, and he was commissioned by Cotton to act as guide.

The roads from St. Jean de Luz were in a bad condition, and "Copenhagen" being very tired, Lord Wellington asked him to provide a mount.

A favourite horse of mine was walking round in front of the house. After taking a glass of wine he mounted her and rode a good hard canter for five hours over bad roads. He said he was never carried better. That night he remained at Hasperren and was in high good humour. I asked Sir Stapleton to name me for a troop in the 18th Hussars. His Lordship made no promise, but on that day fortnight on return of letters from England I was gazetted!

I attribute my good fortune entirely to having supplied the Great Man with a comfortable horse!

A letter which his father shortly after received from the Duke of Richmond, however, makes it appear that he was possibly over-modest:

MY DEAR SHAKESPEAR, You will be glad to hear what Arthur (I mean Wellington) says of your Arthur. "I am very glad that before I knew, or rather before I recollect that Shakespear was a friend of yours I had recommended him for the troop he has got. He is a very fine fellow." You will rejoice as I do that he owes his promotion to himself, not to his friends.

I suppose Huntly and you will take a glass or two at Portswood. I am obliged to go to Brighton to-day; I had rather have taken the Southampton road.

Believe me, my dear Shakespear, yours very sincerely,
RICHMOND.

At the close of the Peninsular War the Army was reduced, and Arthur's regiment being denuded of two troops, he was placed on half-pay, but in

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November (1814) he heard that he had been gazetted to a troop in the 10th Hussars. They were quartered at Romford, and in the spring of 1815 he writes :

Suddenly marched to Whitechapel on most unpleasant duty during the riots on the Poor Laws. All the night work fell on the Cavalry—no police. . . .

I was on duty one day at the Mansion House when a board suddenly appeared at the Exchange : “ Bonaparte escaped from Elba. Thirty millions voted by the City of London for war.” There was soon an end of rioting and we marched home ! Very soon after this we embarked at Ramsgate for Ostend. My troop was left at home, but I was allowed to go out as a Volunteer Captain.

He was present at the historic ball at Brussels given by his old Chief on the 15th June.

About twelve o’clock it was rumoured that we were to march in the morn ! Lord Anglesey left the room at one, giving a hint for all cavalry to repair to their quarters. I left B. at four, the troops were preparing when I reached Voorde. We marched at six to Nivelle, reached Quatre Bras at eight (p.m.), moved up immediately to support the Infantry, but it was too late for anything. Lay in a stubble field that night ; no baggage, no nothing. The night before, how very different, all gaiety and champagne ! Such are the chances of war !

At the corner of the wood close to Quatre Bras I saw the first Cuirassiers. There were six lying close together where they had attempted to charge the Infantry. The action fought there was very severe.

In W. Siborne’s *Waterloo Campaign*¹ he is mentioned by name in the account of a critical moment of the battle, when riding on Sir Hussey Vivian’s staff. The Nassau and Brunswick Infantry were inclined to give way under tremendous

¹ Pp. 16, 55, 514.

fire, when the Duke in person hurried to the spot to rally the Brunswickers. At this moment Vivian's brigade came up, and the 10th Hussars, closing their files, prevented the further retreat of the Nassauers who were brought up against the heads of their horses :

Vivian and Captain Shakespear of the 10th (acting as his extra A.D.C.) rendered themselves conspicuous at this moment by their endeavours to halt and encourage the Nassauers. The Hanoverians and German Legion on the left dashed forward, their drums rolling, and the enemy fell back. The Brunswickers and Nassauers advanced, cheered by Vivian and his A.D.C., and closely followed by the Hussars.

The brigade subsequently received orders to attack the French Cavalry Reserves near La Belle Alliance, and advancing with great gallantry, completely broke the centre of the enemy. After the action, Arthur Shakespear was made Brigade-Major to Sir Hussey. A long but hastily penned letter sent a few days later by him to an intimate friend gives voice to the enthusiasm felt by the British Army for their great leader :

SAINT BENIN, in front of Le Cateau, 23rd June.

MY DEAR VAL, We who have escaped out of the bloody ¹ of the 18th, do bless ourselves most amazingly. Never was such a severe one fought before . . . One scarce dared ask for a friend. How the great and extraordinary man escaped, all are astonishment. His never being touched whilst others fell all around him, particularly his personal staff, is a matter of wonder to everybody.

He was certainly protected by Heaven that day. Where the fire was hottest, there he always went. All are admiration and wonder at his victory. He was

¹ As written.

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everywhere. I must fail in trying to give you an account of him or the conduct of the army . . .

The three Shakespear children in England, whose interest in European affairs had been quickened by following the career of this uncle, were at this time receiving instalments of a journal¹ written specially for them by their mother, describing a lengthy tour by land and water undertaken by the Governor-General in the summer of 1814.

It was indeed a leisurely and stately progress ; the fleet which assembled at the mouth of the Hoogly in the month of June, comprised about four hundred boats, and the older members of the party took with them not only their wives and children, but their horses, hounds, buggies and pianos.

To Lord Moira² and his wife, Lady Loudoun, were assigned a beautiful vessel, painted deep green and ornamented with gold, a similar boat for their children and governess, a banqueting and audience boat, a special boat to contain the band, a second state barge, and "a large vessel fitted up with all the conveniences of a kitchen."

John Talbot Shakespear was attached to the party in the capacity of Superintendent of Police (in Bengal, Behar and Orissa), his boat containing his wife and her three youngest children—two

¹ Extracts from this journal have been given by Colonel Shakespear in the book already referred to ; in *Bengal Past and Present*, by Sir W. Hunter ; in *The Ritchies in India*, by Gerald Ritchie ; in *Memorials of the Thackeray Family*, by Mrs. Bayne ; and in a magazine article by Lieut.-Colonel A. A. Irvine, C.S.I.

² Francis Rawdon, second Earl of Moira and first Marquess of Hastings, Governor-General 1812-22. His wife was Flora Mure Campbell, Countess of Loudoun in her own right.

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boys, George, aged three and a half, Richmond, just over two, and the last baby, a girl named Charlotte, of six months old.

They took over three months to reach Cawnpore by water, the remainder of the journey being by land. From time to time a halt was called for a tiger hunt on a large scale, and the banqueting and audience boat was much in request, visits paid to the various Rajahs along the route being repaid in great state, and courts and levées held at the larger stations. A kind and friendly atmosphere appears to have prevailed throughout the trip, and Emily speaks of Lord Moira and his wife as being "both extremely polite and attentive to their guests, and so affable in their manner that they render their parties very agreeable and divest themselves as far as possible of ceremony." On the 7th December Lord Moira celebrated his birthday by inviting all the children of the party to his boat. Juggling, a marionette show and a magic lantern, were followed by fireworks, which must have made the scene on the Ganges appear to them like a living fairy tale. The evening finished with a

visit to a sideboard abundantly covered with cakes and sweetmeats which they amply discussed. I never saw your little brothers so happy in their lives as they have been this evening. Lord Moira took much notice of them, particularly of George. The little fellow amused his Lordship by asking him when he should have another birthday.

But the river currents were swift and dangerous, and at times the occupants of the other boats had difficulty in attending the Governor-General's parties. On one occasion at least, John Shakes-

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pear put out in a police boat for rescue work, and in passing by the Colgong rocks, a most beautiful stretch of the river, he was himself held up for two days with a broken rudder, and worse was to befall :

In the evening your father was informed that his dog boat had gone down & that the greater number of his valuable dogs had perished.

This was very melancholy intelligence for so keen a sportsman as your father. However, he bore his misfortune like a philosopher.

At Cawnpore a scene of Oriental splendour awaited them. The Nawab, Ghazi-ud-din Hyder, who four years later was invested by the British Government with the title of "King of Oudh," arrived to greet the Governor-General on disembarkation. He was seated on a magnificent elephant, and preceded by innumerable retainers carrying silken standards, followed by a line of state elephants and camels, with their glittering trappings, the Court Palanquins, gold and silver mace-bearers, and a large bodyguard.

Emily Shakespear recounts that Lord Moira advanced to meet the Nawab as he descended from his golden howdah, and that after embracing in "the Asiatic manner," they proceeded arm in arm to the tents, where the latter was presented to Lady Loudoun.

Ghazi-ud-din Hyder,¹ a kindly but feeble-minded man, was fond of children and at a Brigade Review, held on the 19th October, he

¹ The Company had undertaken the defence of the Nawab's dominions and kept a large force in Oudh as a protection against both internal and external enemies.

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repeatedly noticed the two little boys who, with their mother, were stationed near by on an elephant.

A fortnight passed before the vast concourse left Cawnpore for Lucknow. The boys remained with their parents throughout the tour, but the baby, considered too young for the land journey, had been handed over to friends at Patna.

The eldest of the family in India, aged five and a half, was for some reason left behind with her mother's sister in Calcutta, and in years to come, when as Augusta Low it was her fate to spend over eleven years in Lucknow (during the reigns of the next two Nawabs of the line), she must have regretted having missed this state entry into the city.

The line of march extended for many miles :

The *Générale* beats at half-past four in the morning. This is the signal which rouses us, though most reluctantly from our slumbers. . . .

The *Classees* (tent pitchers) immediately commence their attack on the tent pins in all quarters, & soon pull the tents about our ears. We are however allowed an hour to prepare . . . & by this time almost every tent on the ground is struck.

We start on elephants as the safest & indeed the only mode of travelling through a crowd, over a strange country, & in the dark, or rather by torchlight. . . .

When day begins to dawn we throw off some of our wraps & either mount our horses or drive on to our tents, where we find everything arranged in the greatest order & comfort, & sit down with very keen appetites to our breakfast.

Your brothers travel until daylight in a palanquin, in which they complete their night's rest by a sound nap.

They are roused at sunrise to get on an elephant that they may enjoy the pure morning breeze.

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The camp was in itself a small city :

The Grand Street forms the fashionable Promenade in the afternoon, & here company meet & walk till day closes in, when the different families generally form into small dinner-parties for the evening, every person carrying their chair, plate, knife & fork with them, camp fashion.

The procession which eventually streamed into Lucknow must have been a marvellous sight. The multitudes thronging the roof-tops, windows and porticoes added to the riot of colour as Lord Moira and his wife, seated on the same elephant, scattered largess to the crowd. Entertainment followed entertainment during their stay, which lasted from October 24th until November 11th. The Rulers of Oudh kept a large menagerie at Lucknow, and the animal fights staged for their amusement were renowned throughout India. No European guest of note could avoid witnessing these combats, but in an age when bear-baiting, cock-fighting and other brutal sports were the order of the day, they were, sooth to say, much enjoyed. Emily Shakespear, who as a matter of course took her place above the arena with her two infants, looked on, however, with mixed feelings. Of a fight between two elephants she writes :

A combat between two of the most powerful animals of creation offered a sublime spectacle to the beholder, but to me it was highly distressing, nor could I without pain observe the frightful wounds they inflicted on each other.

Later on there were fights arranged between tigers and buffaloes, but on this occasion the former

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would not play the game, but contented themselves with tearing to pieces pasteboard figures of men, which were placed round the enclosure of trelliswork. There was, however, terrific excitement when one of the tigers escaped :

Thousands of people were instantly flying in all directions, rending the air with their shouts.

It was soon caught, and then a bear was driven out of his cage with squibs :

He came dancing out most ludicrously. He made up to one of these figures, took one of the feet into his mouth & renewed his dance : the effect of this scene was so ludicrous that it excited peals of laughter from the beholders. George & Richmond exceedingly enjoyed it.

Some bulldogs were then slipped, which—

. . . dragged him across the stage, apparently tearing him to pieces in so shocking a manner that I retired into one of the rooms with disgust.

The dogs were soon called off, & to my astonishment the bear just shook himself & began dancing as merrily as ever.

After the show was over, the fond mother reports :

We now repaired to the breakfast tables . . . I placed one of my boys on either side of me, & was very proud of my two little beaux.

India at this time was, as usual, not free from war. The Gurkhas had been encroaching on British territory, and Lord Moira, who had been studying the question during his tour, declared war against Nepaul in November.

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At Hardwar, Emily heard of the death of her soldier brother, nine years younger than herself, at the taking of Hullingha Fort.

On this date (30th December, 1814) I received the distressing intelligence of the loss of my brave, excellent brother Tom, who fell gloriously in the service of his country.

From the regiment they heard that the survivors of the Company, in spite of caste restrictions, had volunteered out of devotion to perform the funeral offices.

The Governor-General was a keen sportsman, and during the winter months, the journal abounds with records of tiger shooting. Lions were then common in the districts of Saharanpur and Hansi, and in the latter neighbourhood the ladies accompanied the sportsmen for the first part of the day on the 17th January :

We were out for many hours, but unfortunately saw nothing but the prints of the lion's footsteps, and returned home disappointed and fatigued to a very late breakfast.

What happened subsequently is not entered in her journal and probably never reached her ears. It is, however, recorded in Lord Moira's own journal. Two lionesses were followed, one of which fell to his gun ; the other disappeared into a ravine, but on again emerging into view was fired at and believed to have been killed. However, she suddenly dashed out from a thorn-break :

Springing on the elephant on which Mr. Shakespear was seated, she fixed her talons in each of its ears while she vigorously assailed its forehead with her teeth. The violent exertions of the elephant threw Mr. Shakespear

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out of the howdah. . . . Two of Skinner's horsemen, seeing the situation, galloped forward to protect him, but happily the lioness fell off on the opposite side to that where Mr. Shakespear lay and attacked another elephant.

At Hansi they met that remarkable man, Captain James Skinner—son of a Scotch father and a Rajput mother, who had raised the famous body of Irregular Horse.

Not long afterwards John Shakespear was sent with a deputation detached on a complimentary mission to the King of Delhi, the Governor-General himself, for political reasons, avoiding a personal visit, and during the course of one week his wife filled seventy pages of her journal with a description of the royal city and its historical and other associations, her object being to instruct as well as amuse her absent children—in the manner of all devoted parents of that period.

The journey was continued through Meerut, Brindaban, Fatehpur and Sikri to Agra, where the Shakespears took up their quarters in one of the octagonal pavilions of the Taj.

We were thus enabled to admire the lovely buildings at all hours of the day; I might almost add of the night . . . We used to wander about the terraces and gardens till midnight, never weary of contemplating the scene . . . The echo within the building is very powerful; I placed my piano within it, and it had the effect of a full-toned organ; slow and solemn airs were therefore heard to advantage. The report of a pistol fired within the Taj was really sublime; it resembled loud and deep thunder rolling over our heads.

The journal finishes at Meerut where a second visit was paid in March, but as the Governor-General did not finally return to the Capital until

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October, it is probable that the "Superintendent" of Police remained in attendance until that time.

* * * * *

Social life in Calcutta was very gay with its succession of routs and balls and masquerades, but death was always lurking round the corner. Less than a month before Lord Moira's return,¹ a sad cortège had wound its way down fashionable Park Street (Burial Ground Street had been its name a decade or two before), when the body of Emily's favourite brother was borne to a cemetery already over-full.

Richmond's constitution had been enfeebled by constant bouts of fever, and he died after long illness in his official residence in the outskirts of the city, which had once been the country lodge of Sir Philip Francis.

In 1816 Emily Shakespear gave birth to her eighth child, a daughter who was named Marianne, and her devoted sister Augusta, who had lived with her since her marriage, decided at long last to have a home of her own. At the age of thirty-one, by the standards of the time she was a most elderly bride, but her husband, John Elliot—at that time Judge of the suburbs of Calcutta—was a generation older than herself.

One year later a quartet of small children sailed from Calcutta for England; the time had come for John and Emily to part with a second batch of their numerous family, and with them went their cousin, whose beautiful young mother had

¹ The date given by Sir William Hunter—as recorded on his tombstone—is September 13th, 1815. Mr. Bayne gives it as one year later.

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become engaged to Major Carmichael Smyth, and was remaining on in India.

Augusta, aged eight, the only girl of the party, must have acted the little mother to the other three. William Makepeace Thackeray was then six years old, George and Richmond Shakespear being respectively one year older and one year younger than himself.

The vessel touched at St. Helena, and the children were taken to Longwood where they had a glimpse of Napoleon. "That is he," said their native attendant, "that is Bonaparte; he eats three sheep every day and all the little children he can lay hands on."

They arrived home to find London plunged in the deepest mourning for the heiress to the throne. Arthur Shakespear was on duty at Windsor on the occasion of the funeral, and following his invariable custom, made a record of his impressions :

Prince Leopold [her husband] stood at the head of the vault, looking ghastly, as if he would have thrown himself in. The Princess was so popular that the plumes of the horses were torn to pieces on the way from Claremont to Windsor, nor could the military keep the mob off.

The children's grandfather, who since 1815 had been for the second time a widower, was given power of attorney by his eldest son for all expenses connected with their education. Their cousin was entrusted to the guardianship of Peter Moore, who in spite of his own financial vicissitudes looked faithfully and wisely after the considerable fortune of his wife's little great-nephew. Augusta did not fare too badly in her school days. There were two young daughters of John Shakespear's second

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marriage at the educational establishment of a Mrs. Ludlam, much patronized by the family, and she found herself in company, not only with an elder sister, but with a half-aunt, considerably nearer to herself in age.

The three boys, poor mites, went to a school in Hampshire, poignant memories of which were recalled by one of them forty-four years later.¹

We Indian children were consigned to a school of which our deluded parents had heard a favourable report, but which was governed by a horrible little tyrant, who made our young lives so miserable that I remember kneeling of a night & saying—"Pray God I may dream of my mother."

From this unhappy private school William Thackeray and Richmond went together to Charterhouse, while George was sent to Harrow.

Old John by this time had given up hunting and was living at Brunswick House, Southampton, described by him as "an asylum for my grandchildren and an abode of great happiness and comfort."

With his son Arthur he spent much time yachting on the Solent, and the names of two small yachts belonging to him—a yawl of 34 tons and a somewhat smaller schooner—appear in the lists of the R.Y.S. between 1816 and 1824.

He was, however, finding it increasingly necessary to pay prolonged visits to London; like many others he had to foot the bill for the too generous living of his class and generation.

Soon after the children's arrival, little William Thackeray was taken to see him, and he wrote on April 4th, 1818, to tell his mother of the occasion.

¹ Thackeray—*Roundabout Papers—On Lett's Diary.*

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He was very kind & gave me a great many pretty books to read & promised that I should go every time that George & Richmond went.¹

Arthur Shakespear, meanwhile, who had been long engaged, was in lodgings in Mount Street in order to be near his fiancée,² to whom he had been long engaged, and as the little boy must have come into contact with the young uncle so much idolized by his cousins, it seems probable that at this time a special interest in Waterloo and its associations may have taken root in that sensitive, receptive mind.

In November of the following year John Shakespear wrote to his second son, Henry, in India :

I have been compelled to alter all my system, sell the house at Southampton, & remove myself, bag & baggage to London. This is occasioned by gout, gravel & a tendency to stone, which frightened me up to London twice last year with immoderate pain & at great expense. We have no good Surgical Practitioners in difficult cases. They are always to be had in London. I am under the care of Sir Everard Home, Serjeant-Surgeon to the Crown, who keeps me tolerably free from pain when there.

In a later letter, he says :

I have bought the lease—twenty-one years—of another house in the New Street, called Regent Street (Oxford Road), where you may direct.

This house, for which he paid a rent of £200 a year, stood on part of the site now occupied by Jay's shop.

¹ Given in Lady Ritchie's introduction to *The Newcomes*.

² His wife was a Miss Harriet Skip-Dyot-Bucknall, a considerable heiress.

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But the only continuous home atmosphere known to the children was that provided by their Thackeray aunt.

Charlotte had been sixteen when her sisters sailed for India ; she did not marry until she was twenty-nine, two years after her father's death, although family tradition has it that John Ritchie, her future husband, a Baltimore merchant of Aberdeenshire stock, fell in love with her at sight as she was travelling to London in the stage-coach, clad in the deepest of parental mourning.

After marriage, her home in Southampton Row, which had a long stretch of garden behind it, and was a house admirably adapted for children, became the family rallying ground.

John and Emily Shakespear, with their two remaining children, were at this time spending a year at the Cape, where Emily's ninth and last baby was born. She was christened in August, 1820, with the usual formidable array of Christian names,¹ but was always known as Selina.

John Talbot Shakespear's last appointment was that of First Magistrate in Calcutta, and during his absence his brother Henry acted for him. Before he returned to India a game of general post was played : Emily, aged sixteen, came out to join her parents, and Charlotte² and Marianne³ were sent to join Augusta at Mrs. Ludlam's. With the last named, a little roly-poly of four years old, her mother appears to have been especially loth to part. Such partings—always

¹ Sarah Eliza Donnithorne (1820–1908).

² Charlotte Mary Anne (1813–49), wife of J. H. Crawford, B.C.S.

³ Marianne Eliza Sparks (1816–91), wife of Major J. Irvine, Bengal Engineers.

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the bitterest portion of the British lot in India—
were more cruel in times when all the days of
childhood had to run their course before the
possibility of reunion. The little girl, who never
saw her parents again, cherished all her life a
letter which was brought to her on board ship
just before sailing :

MY BELOVED MARIANNE,

I send you a little parcel because I think it will please
you to receive it from your mother. . . .

Poor old Ayah has been crying sadly for you both,
sweet love. Your mother can think of nothing but her
two darling little girls, & would give the world to give
you once more a kiss & take her sweet little Marianne
once more in her arms.

The only comfort I can have now you are gone away
from me, my beloved, will be to hear that you are well
& happy & good & that everybody in the ship loves my
little Marianne.

And they will love you my sweetest, for you are a
kind-hearted generous little creature. Be good-natured
& kind to all the children, particularly to poor —, for
he has not got his father & mother on board.

Charlotte will be like a mother to you & I am sure that
you sweet girls will never quarrel. Say your prayers every
night & morning, never tell an untruth, never be sulky.

I am sure my sweet Marianne will never forget her
mother. I have made you a little tippet & bonnet for
your doll, my love, & send you the little handkerchief
you liked so much, & a lock of my hair. God Almighty
bless you, my darling child. Ever Your affecte mother,

EMILY SHAKESPEAR.

Soon after his return to Calcutta, John Talbot
was made Puisne Judge of the Sudder Division,
the highest judicial post in the Company's gift.
The parents did not keep their eldest daughter
long. William Fleming Dick, a Bengal Civilian,
an old friend, met the family on arrival and

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promptly fell in love with the younger Emily. He was born in the same year as John Low, and was five years younger than his father-in-law. He was almost immediately transferred to Bareilly. Another family wedding had taken place during the absence at the Cape. Augusta Elliot, widowed within a year, was now the wife of Doctor Alexander Halliday, and her second choice was the source of mild, but perpetual astonishment to her relations. It was a case of "Beauty and the Beast."

Emily herself, now in her forties, was still a very pretty woman, adored by her husband and generally popular. A newspaper cutting, preserved in a family scrap-book, gives (in the journalese of the period) an account of one of the typical entertainments in which Calcutta rejoiced, given by her in February, 1824. It must have been a lively affair. "Marmion" and "The Pirate" were represented by groups in costume, while "Punch and his grotesque spouse skipped about very amusingly," and finally the writer surpassed himself by declaring that—"in short, everything was splendidly antithetical and whimsical." During the summer months John and Henry Shakespear were sharing a house, and Emily's eldest son, the third John Shakespear, was momently expected. He arrived in August. Calcutta was then suffering from a epidemic of fever, and on the 23rd of that month John Talbot wrote to Emily Dick :

Your brother John arrived here a few days ago, quite well. He seems a fine lad. At present he is busy putting on his gold-laced jacket, etc. . . . Your mother has been suffering greatly from the effects of the late epidemic.

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She has been very unwell indeed & is now only recovering slowly. Poor little Selina is still so weak she can hardly stand.

John gives a very good account of all the family, & says that Augusta [then aged fifteen] is very anxious to come out with William, who will probably leave England in January next. . . .

Your mother will write in a day or two.

Ever, my love, Affectionately Yours,

J. SHAKESPEAR.

The following lines from Emily to her son were probably the last ever penned by her.

MY DEAREST JOHN, I need not tell you I rejoice in your safe arrival, nor that I am anxious to see you, & hope to be well enough to have this happiness this afternoon. Pray do not run about in the sun in this dreadful weather.

My dearest John's most affectionate Mother, E.S.

Her condition improving, she was moved to Barrackpore, but the change did her no good, and they brought her back to Calcutta by water, where on September 29th she passed away. Her son, poor lad, wrote to his "Aunt Ritchie":

You may think, my dear Aunt, what a blow it was to me to return after so many years, & then to have a mother snatched away in less than six weeks, just as I had begun to know the value of such a blessing.

His father, who had himself been gravely ill, never recovered from the blow. In writing to William Dick, he anxiously inquired if a letter to his daughter had been received—"as I shall never have the heart to write upon that dreadful subject again."

Augusta Halliday and her husband accompanied the stricken man on a cruise to the Sandheads,

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which a century ago was the resort for invalids on short leave from Calcutta. He returned, little better, but endeavoured to resume work. He was, however, eventually compelled to leave India, taking with him his little girl of five years old. Feeling that a voyage to England would absorb too much of his savings, he decided to go to the Cape, the Government considerately ordering a home-going vessel to land him there. From the ship, he wrote to Emily Dick :

29th January, 1825.

MY BELOVED CHILD, the *Rose* is standing out to sea, & I write by the pilot to bid you farewell. Your Uncle Henry & John came down with me. . . . The ship is a thousand tons burthen, my windows are well out of the water. . . . Little Selina's cot is placed at the bottom of the cabin, where she sleeps very comfortably.

He did not live to reach the Cape. An old friend of his, on the ship, wrote an account of his last days to the family, saying that from the 28th March their father spoke of his death as certain—"He talked of it with the most perfect composure and coolness. . . . He told me that he had had his full share of happiness in life and that he could never have been happy again." His last thoughts were with his eldest daughter, to whom he wrote, enclosing—"a lock of my grey hair with my most affectionate love." He was in his forty-second year.

To Charlotte Ritchie he also wrote, saying that he was sending her his beloved wife's ring and their youngest child. Emily's miniature,¹ he

¹ It has always been a matter of regret to those of her descendants, who like myself possess miniatures of John Talbot Shakespear and his parents, that this should have been the only portrait of Emily Thackeray.

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directed, should lie on his heart when his body was committed to the deep. The log of the *Rose* contains the following entries :

Tuesday, 12th April, 1825, at 5 a.m. Departed this life John Shakespear Esq., Civil Service.

Wednesday, 13th April, 1825, 7 a.m. Committed the body of the deceased to the deep with the usual ceremonies.

Charlotte Ritchie received her little orphaned niece with the same warmth of welcome which she had bestowed on the other children.

She was soon sent to join her sisters at Mrs. Ludlam's establishment, which is described as being—"not a school, but a Home, such as Indian parents paid for highly."

It was a big house, in North End Road, Fulham, with a good garden, and an entrance gate on which were two large stone balls. Mrs. Ludlam was an old lady with indifferent health, and apparently not much education was imparted there.

Some sixty years later, at the request of Malcolm Low, her sister Augusta's eldest son, Selina committed to paper some of her early memories, of which the happiest were those of holidays spent at Southampton Row.

... Dear Aunt Ritchie's house was our *Elysium*, Liberty Hall. Everyone there did as they liked. The elder ones, occasionally William Thackeray with them, got up a good deal of fun & acting.

William Ritchie [her aunt's eldest boy] was so spoilt. And one day he snatched off a leg of mutton just being placed on the table & banged it on the stairs, saying, "Mama, you know I hate leg of mutton."

In after years, William Thackeray, too, wrote

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of his aunt's home as one in which he had spent the only cheerful times of his early boyhood.

I recollect my Aunt Ritchie's kind face when I came to her as a child from India—for six-and-thirty years always so kind & loving & tender.

Once more before his final exit old John Shakespear "removed himself, bag and baggage," this time to Cheltenham, where his happy care-free existence came to an end in January, 1825.

For some time he had been living considerably above his income. His daughters were fortunately provided for under the marriage settlements of their mothers. For the sons there was not much left over; to the eldest, who had predeceased him by five months, his only bequest was "My statue of Shakespeare as an heirloom."

The names of two "natural daughters," about whom there is some mystery, were put down for small legacies in the will. They were born between the time of his first wife's death and his second marriage. Both had been sent to India, presumably by their father, where they married well, and they appear to have been on affectionate terms with his legitimate children. The wedding of one of them, known as "Miss Harriet Shakespear," took place at Nuddea, from her half-brother's boat during the tour of 1814, Lord Moira's chaplain officiating.

Augusta (who had left school for the Ritchies' house), and her brother William, the eldest of the grandchildren then in England, probably attended their grandfather's funeral. The old man had left a written wish to be "buried frugally, either at

Laycock, Nutshalling or Stepney, as I may chance to drop."

It was a time when filial piety found satisfaction in imposing obsequies, and possibly his devoted children considered that they were carrying out this request!

The expenses amounted to about £225, of which £72 was expended on mourning coaches. From Cheltenham to Laycock, where the body was placed in the Talbot vault, is a long stretch of road, and the outlay for the sustenance of the undertaker and his men came to over £10 10s.; tobacco, repasts and beverages were provided, the last item accounting for the major part of the expenditure! A costly accessory was that of mourning hat-bands, the bill for which came to £27 6s. 6d.; those for the four chief mourners measured 2½ yards each and were of "rich sarsanet" at 11s. a yard. Two mutes, who were paid 15s. each, carried sticks ornamented with bows of the same material, 3½ yards long, at 8s. a yard.

The clinging, graceful style of the Empire period had just—with some suddenness—been relegated to the background, but in spite of the fact that both sleeves and skirts were rapidly expanding, the three ladies of the family were enabled to show respect to a parent's memory on a generous scale.

Of black "bombazine" 160 yards were laid in, 36 of crepe, 48 of a "black stuff," and 43 of a material described as "state," or "slate jant"! No doubt much of all this was destined to garb the household retainers in suitable habiliments of woe.

Cheltenham and its neighbourhood remained a

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meeting-ground for the family. The faithful Arthur, with whom his brother John's sons spent all their holidays, had refused, on his father's account, in the preceding year an offer from Lord Combermere to appoint him to his staff in Dublin, and was now settled at Boxwell Court, near Wotton-under-Edge. Once again, in 1825 his old Chief wished to appoint him First A.D.C. on going as Commander-in-Chief to India, but the claims of a growing family prevented his acceptance, and he saw no more active service. It was not until she was seventeen that Augusta Shakespear was allowed to sail for India. Accompanied by bales of luggage, and the inevitable appendage of a musical young lady—a harp, she was escorted to Gravesend by her two uncles, Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Langslow.

The whole family, including "Aunt Ritchie" herself, had recently sat for their portraits to old Adam Buck, earlier renowned as the depicter of garlanded sylphs, engaged in pirouetting on one toe, but who now was busily occupied in fulfilling commissions for miniatures from old and young.

Augusta's portrait, with the elaborate coiffure of corkscrew curls, then *à la mode*, exhibits a pleasing rather than a strictly pretty face, and her figure certainly conforms to the description given in *Lovel the Widower*¹ of another specimen of Buck's work.

Among the names of thirty-five passengers carried by the *Asia*, which left Gravesend on June 10th, 1826, was entered that of—"Miss A. Shakespear, returning to the land of her birth."

¹ "My poor mother's miniature by old Adam Buck, in pencil and pink with no waist to speak of at all."

Twenty-four years had elapsed since her mother, and a round half-century since her mother's mother had embarked with as high and eager expectations for the Land of Promise. In the interval there had been a leisurely improvement in manners and morals. Drinking was less heavy and language more restrained, but since the abortive voyage, one year earlier, of the *Enterprise*, no change had taken place in the mode of ocean transport. The *Asia* reached Diamond Harbour on the 21st October, the voyage having taken two days less than that of the *United Kingdom* which had carried Emily Thackeray to India.

Augusta found there more relations than she had left in England. In addition to a sister and two brothers (William had sailed in the preceding year), two uncles, an aunt and several cousins, an earlier generation was represented by a veteran great-uncle, at this time Postmaster-General, who is not known in his fifty-three years of service to have ever revisited England.¹ She remained long in Calcutta as the guest of her "Aunt Halliday," and that lady's grotesque old husband,—described in Selina's reminiscences as "the kindest old fellow, with a wonderful nose and very Scotch accent, who looks exceedingly funny in uniform."

The most pungent description, however, was given years later by William Ritchie to his mother.

She [his aunt] is most kind-hearted & truly excellent but with a great share of common sense & a love of the world & society. Her manners are quite those of a lady of the old school, & a very fine old lady she is. . . .

Her excellent husband is the funniest old gent you

¹ Colin Shakespear (1764-1835), who was fifteen years younger than his brother John.

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ever saw—eyes like saucers, nose like a rhinoceros, complexion like a carrot & a heart like a prince's. . . . Yet a happier old couple or more attached don't exist.

A letter written a few months after her arrival by Augusta to Charlotte Ritchie proves that she was thoroughly enjoying life in most congenial surroundings.

February 18th, 1827.

. . . I am sure, my dear Aunt, it will give you great pleasure to hear that I am living with dear Aunt Halliday, who is as kind to me as my dear aunts in England were. Her spirits have suffered severely from her many & great sorrows, & she cannot, even now, bear to hear either of my dear parents mentioned.

My Aunt is a remarkably fine woman, & a most sensible agreeable companion. She is quite one of the best dressers I ever saw, & indeed is quite proverbial for it here. Her millinery has arrived quite safe. She is much pleased with it. . . . Talking about dress puts me in mind of a Fancy Ball I was at last week at Mrs. Casement's, who is famous for her parties.

I was one of a group of eight ladies & eight gentlemen dressed in the Turkish costume. It created quite a sensation. The whole staircase was crowded as we went up to see us enter . . .

Mr. Dick & dear Emily . . . are most anxious that I should join them at Bareilly. Dear John has just obtained four months' leave & is gone to meet them at Meerut, where they are at present, on the circuit. . . . They say he is now one of the finest young men in the Service. William was here on my arrival, but has been sent to Berhampur. Lord Combermere has however promised, on the first vacancy, to put him into the Horse Artillery, & so I trust they are both in a fair way of getting on well.

I am sorry indeed to hear that Richmond [not quite fifteen] has failed in his examination, but surely he is much younger than John & William were when they went to Addiscombe.

I am delighted with my Uncle Henry, who is one of the most gentlemanly men I ever met. He has been

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most kind to me. I ride almost every morning on a beautiful horse of Mrs. H. Shakespear's.

I think India is one of the most delightful places for a female that can possibly be. I have not experienced any of the miseries of the hot or rainy seasons.

The climate ever since I arrived has been one of the most delightful & healthy that can possibly be imagined.

Pray write often to me, my dear Aunt, & believe me that the greatest pleasure I can receive will be in hearing of the welfare & happiness of those whose kindness to me I can never forget.

Your very affectionate & grateful
AUGUSTA SHAKESPEAR.

Augusta did not rush precipitately into matrimony like her sister, and over two years had elapsed since her arrival, when she met John Low at Mussourie and became engaged to him.

CHAPTER VI

John Low's Marriage—Gwalior—Lucknow, 1829–1831

REIGNS OF THE KINGS OF OUDH

NAWAB GHAZI-UD-DIN HYDER, 1814–27
invested in 1819 with the title of
King of Oudh,
by the British Government
(succeeded by his son)

NASIR-UD-DIN HYDER, 1827–37
(succeeded by his uncle)

NASIR-UD-DAULAH (Muhammed Ali Shah), 1837–42
(succeeded by his son)

AMJAD ALI SHAH, 1842–7
(succeeded by his son)

WAJID ALI SHAH, 1847–56
(Deposed by the Government of India)

THE engagement was not a long one, and John Low wrote from Jaipur to announce the date of the wedding :

JYEPOOR, March 16th, 1829.
MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I wrote you a long letter from Meerut, telling you of my engagement, but if by any chance the ship that takes this should get home first, I beg to refer you to Col. Russell,¹ who knew my intended's father & mother

¹ Colonel (afterwards Major-General Sir James) Russell, of Ashestiel, had returned to Scotland in 1825, after a life-time spent in India. Ashestiel was rented for some years by his cousin, Sir Walter Scott.

MARRIAGE

intimately, & also her eldest sister, Mrs. Dick, one of the most accomplished & amiable women in the world. I am now in almost daily correspondence with Augusta.

How I wish I could take her to you if it were only for a month to establish personal acquaintance.

There is something in the mildness & cheerfulness of her manners & conversation I am confident would greatly please you all. Let us hope we may all meet at Clatto. I hope to reach the hills about the 4th of next month, & to be married on the 8th, which is Mrs. Dick's birthday.

After the ceremony which took place at Mussourie on the 10th April, he dispatched a short letter to Clatto, promising to write fully by a later ship. After the lapse of two months, he makes a naïve apology for this unfulfilled promise.

. . . What makes my silence the more extraordinary is that I have been constantly begged by Augusta to write. She is an agreeable, accomplished, sweet & affectionate companion.

The honeymoon, spent at Mussourie, was a prolonged one. John Low had purchased a house there, and in the course of a letter to a friend, he says :

. . . I have lost 4,000 rupees by my hill house, for I made it (most foolishly) a splendid mansion. I was most glad to get two-thirds of my house money back in ready cash from Hakeem Mehdee.¹

Before returning to his post, he wrote again to his mother :

. . . I have set my heart on having a view of Clatto, & a survey of the property, shewing the fields, turns of

¹ Hakim Mehdi, former Minister at the Court of Lucknow, although at this time an exile at Fategarh, was still an immensely rich man.

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the road, plantations, cottages, etc. The drawing I would wish to be in water colour & the picture a good size. . . .

I hope you don't forget to give my most affectionate love to Aunt Fettes. The style of my wife's features, high nose & dark hair & eyebrows puts me sometimes a good deal in mind of her.

I will now tell you a piece of news that I trust will be pleasing to you. My dear better-half, if all goes well, will give you a little Indian grandchild about the end of January.

By the end of the year he was back at Jaipur, where the child—a girl—was born on the 14th January. The Nasirabad Chaplain, happening to pass through the city on his march to Agra, she was christened in the following month by the names of Susan Elizabeth.

William Low, who had been for over twenty years continuously in India, arrived from Madras on a visit, and stood godfather. Aleck Deas was now quartered with his regiment, the 5th Bengal N. Infantry.

JYEPOOR, *Feb. 28th, 1830.*
MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I delayed writing till I could tell you of William's arrival. . . . He is looking as well as when we last parted at Bithoor, a period of upwards of ten years.

As he has suffered much in the hot season for several years past, he thinks of going to the hills during April & May, & proposes returning to us here in June, staying till the rains shall be over, & ultimately embarking for England at Madras in January next. . . .

Aleck Deas is at a station about 80 miles from here, & I have applied to my friends in Calcutta to get him appointed to command my escort, which will enable him to save a little of his pay, & I hope do him good in many ways. . . .

I have got leave for him to come here next month in order to make him & William acquainted.

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Sir John Malcolm was at this time Governor of Bombay, and the post of Resident at Gwalior falling vacant, my grandfather wrote to ask for his interest to secure him the appointment :

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

Stewart's promotion to Hyderabad gives me faint hopes, *faint they really are*, of succeeding him at Gwalior, if Fielding should succeed in his application for Katmandoo, & I need hardly say that these hopes would be not a little brightened if you would kindly lend a helping hand by writing to your old friend, Lord William Bentinck.¹ . . .

I can assure you with perfect sincerity that it will cause no diminution of my gratitude nor of my affection towards you if any circumstance should prevent your consenting to volunteer any recommendation to the Governor-General—so do it or do it not.

It is a'ane to Dandy, as Dinmont would say.

Let me now return you my warm thanks for the perusal of your many able minutes. You can hardly imagine the anxiety with which I devoured them, or how great a treat it is to have so good an insight into what is going on in other parts of India. . . .

We have lately had long & affectionate letters from Fife—shortly after my mother heard of my marriage, an event which afforded the old lady very great satisfaction.

A few months later he writes to his mother of a family gathering at Jaipur :

. . . We expect William down again from the hills about the middle of next month, & William Deas will probably reach this a month later. Aleck Deas will also be here, so that we shall muster strong in people from Fife, though not "Fifish people" ² I think !

¹ Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839), second son of the third Duke of Portland. Governor-General 1828-35.

² A Scotch expression taking its origin in the unfortunate prevalence of lunacy in the "Kingdom"—so isolated in earlier times by the estuaries of Forth and Tay.

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Little Susan is crowing like a little cock, & is at all times, thank God, in the finest possible health.

In the course of the year he received the appointment to Gwalior, a post which he seems to have much liked, and gained the commendation of the Government for the manner in which he dealt with the intrigues of the Regent of that state.

Emily Dick and her husband visited England at this time, taking with them their one remaining child (they had already lost four), a little girl of eight.

The three Shakespear sisters had been removed from Mrs. Ludlam's, and placed under the custody of a Mme Zialtzke,—“a little old lady of Polish origin,” who lived in Upper Bedford Place, of whom Selina, in her *Reminiscences*, has much to say :

... The old lady had certain hobbies, one was that she alone could teach the use of the globes. She was very irritable on Globe day, & the Celestial was my *bête noire*.

How we quaked when the door opened. Enter M^{me}. Z. in her turban.

“Now, young ladies, bring your Cancer to the meridian.” Alas ! I never could find either. I was so short-sighted.

She was particular about *deportment*. “Your carriage,” she would say, “is my chief care,” & we used to walk two & two round the schoolroom in order to learn to bow gracefully to imaginary friends, M. Sacré, our irascible French dancing master, accompanying us, fiddling, reproofing, encouraging all in a breath !

On arrival, the Dicks made Cheltenham their headquarters, where they made the acquaintance of Catherine Deas, who was making a long stay there with her daughter. Emily at once withdrew

the two elder girls from school, while the little Selina joined them for the holidays.

There are no letters in the collection, from Clatto, between August, 1828 and 1831. They were difficult times for S. E. Low, and the departure of her youngest son for Australia in a bankrupt condition was another heavy blow.

Henry was in debt for many thousand pounds ; in connection with Samuel Somerville's affairs, he had been acting as a partner in the Fife Bank, and had become involved in the bank's wild speculations. Her daughter Susan had lost her youngest son (the little squeeker of 1827) in 1829, and while the child was dying, the news came that her husband had landed in England, dangerously ill. In striking contrast to the majority of his contemporaries, Colonel Foulis made the passage to and from India at least five times, and in spite of advanced years and feeble health, this was not yet his final voyage.

In February, 1831, while expecting the return of her son William, S. E. Low wrote to John, acknowledging a gift of money sent by her daughter-in-law for the poor of Blebo Craigs :

... Catherine is still at Cheltenham, she is quite delighted with Mrs. Dick. I had the happiness of receiving dear Augusta's kind & magnificent gift. Many a heart has been made glad by it, and astonished to think that *folks sae far awa* should remember them.¹

Your letter to me is one of the most delightful I ever received. From the day I heard of your having got into the Political Department, it has been my daily prayer that you might be able to hold fast to your integrity.

¹ Augusta, being of age, had come into a legacy from an uncle, young St. John Thackeray, killed five years before.

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[The reference is evidently to one of the bribes pressed upon him during his residence in native Courts.]

I had a letter from poor infatuated, yet still dear Henry. At the time he wrote he was up the country in order to let an estate of B——'s; he talks much of his kindness, but if he does not give him the money he owes him, I don't think much of his kindness.

B. is agreeable & plausible, & has always had too great a way with Henry, & I rejoiced when he was provided for out of the country. Little did I think that Henry would follow.

Dear William is now, I hope, sailing with prosperous gales towards us. His great friend, Colonel Hunter will be in London about the time he should arrive, which I think may be of service to him.

Indians sometimes do things in the way of expense in London that they look back upon with regret.

There is a very active canvass going on. Colonel Lindsay has started up as an opponent to Captain Wemyss. You may be sure that I am keen for Captain Wemyss.

. . . Aunt Hill has most generously given Georgina three hundred pounds to make up in some degree for the loss she suffered by poor unfortunate Henry. It is truly kind of her.

CLATTO, Aug. 14th, 1831.

I wrote my dear Augusta that William was arrived. It was a great solace to me who am confined with the effects of rheumatic fever. It affects my right hand very much, but don't think the tremor smacks of apoplexy like the Archbishop of Granada.

Robert Deas has got a Cadetcy. He is obliged to go to a gentleman who prepares for Addiscombe. He did not pass, he was rejected for a deficiency in latin.

William tell me you wished for jam; a box containing it, & another tin box containing a dozen boxes of Butler's powders & a doll for darling Susan, has been despatched.

Peter Cleghorn walks about for ever as he did formerly. We think he should either bring or send a change of apparel, but he is a worthy fellow & an affectionate friend. We had a sad bustle at the election. Colonel Lindsay, younger of Balcarres is the member, & Captain Wemyss is out for the present. William intends to wait upon

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Captain Wemyss to thank him for his unremitting attentions to your father, & his own & your father's obligations to General Wemyss, who got him his Cadetcy, & your father's Commissary.¹ Doctor & Mrs. Macdonald returned from Pitcaithley in high health, & then she came to such a making of jams & jellies as kept her broiling for several days. The doctor, after taking one good look, exclaims—"Prodigious"!—his old word, you remember.

I hope your visit to Lord William Bentinck turned out agreeable, he writes in high terms of you to Sir John Malcolm, from whom I had a letter.

I am so helpless that I must be lifted off my chair & set out in bed. Georgina has not even been to Blebo for four months. Maria is here every day, & great attention from all our neighbours.

Dearest John, may all blessings attend you, my dear Augusta, & darling Susan . . .

Little Susan's life had flickered out at Gwalior some two months before, but the only reference to it in John's letter-book occurs in the following year :

. . . Your letter reached me a few days ago, & brought back to our minds many saddening recollections respecting the fate of our beloved infant, but I must not inflict them on you, for I know well that your kind heart must already have been wounded more than I could wish . . .

A few weeks later his mother wrote again from Clatto :

. . . William is getting on very successfully at partridge shooting ; he is really a fine creature & easy entertained. Catherine is at Cairnie Lodge, she is pretty well, eats well, sleeps well, but is not able for much fatigue.

She goes to the Golfer's Ball next week with little Catherine. William goes too. He called at Wemyss

¹ Robert Low was Commissary of St. Andrews (having jurisdiction over Wills) from 1803 until his death.

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Castle¹ the other day, & was most kindly received by Captain Wemyss, to whom I wrote by him. He sent me a basket of the finest grapes I ever saw. I am still confined to the flat & cannot go to bed without assistance.

I don't know if I ever mentioned a family, now proprietors of Falkland, the Tindall Bruces. Soon after her uncle's death Miss Bruce married Mr. Tindall. She paid his debts, amounting to fifty thousand pounds, settled very handsomely on him, but kept a good deal in her own power.

Now according to Meggy Mucklebacket in *The Antiquary*, she that keeps the purse rules the roast.

She is quite a miser,² & Charlotte's nurse, who has a daughter a servant in the house gave me the most extraordinary instances.

When her daughter told her, she said—"Now, Mother, you must not tell," but she answered—"Jean, I make no such promise," which brought to my mind what a French author says :

"On tait le bien, même le mâl,
le ridicule, jamais."

Mrs. Morrison, Naughton, has new furnished, her drawing room crimson damask & everything suitable ; she has likewise made a new family bed-room, the most complete thing I ever saw.

It is supposed that Captain Duncan,³ brother to Lord

¹ Scott, in his journal, describes a visit to Wemyss Castle in June, 1827. "We visited Wemyss Castle on our return to Kinghorn . . . to the sea, it has a noble situation, overhanging the red rocks. We were received by Captain Wemyss, a gallant sea-captain, who could talk against a south-wester, by his wife, Lady Emma, and her sister, Lady Isabelle, beautiful women of the house of Errol."

² Mr. Tindall, who built the New House of Falkland, and was prominent in county work (he rejoiced in the Christian name of Onesiphorus !) was of a very different disposition to his parsimonious wife, and left an injunction in his will, that should she survive him, she was to continue to drive, as before, with no less than four horses !

³ Mrs. Morrison's only child had died some years before. On her own death, in her ninetieth year, the estate went to Alexander Duncan, son of the Captain Duncan mentioned by S. E. Low.

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Duncan, is to be the heir ; he is a relation, & was a lover of Isabella, though she had refused him.

The last accounts of poor Henry, he was in Van Diemen's Land superintending an estate of B——'s, who says to Henry that he has lost by agriculture & can pay him nothing ; his bond is worth nothing, not having been renewed, his honor is all we have to trust to. . . .

John Low's stay at Gwalior was of short duration, for within a year he was offered the appointment to the Residency of Lucknow by Lord William Bentinck. The offer was unexpected, but he was very loth to leave Gwalior.¹ The salary was higher, but so were the expenses, for much entertaining was expected at Lucknow. To William Dick he wrote, enclosing a copy of his reply to the Governor-General's secretary :

GWALIOR, July 28th, 1831.

. . . My first impression on receiving Packenham's letter was that I would rather have thrown five thousand rupees into the sea than even have seen it !—for I hate the fuss & splendour & vanity of Lucknow. . . .

Nevertheless, after two days' anxious cogitation the enclosed was the result, to which I was mainly induced by the medical gentry here. . . .

If ill health were to overtake Augusta or myself in this feverish place, & still more if a child were to suffer in that way, I should never forgive myself.

The duties of Lucknow, I have no doubt, will be much more vexatious than here, but I hope to avoid much annoyance by quiet verbal advice instead of those violent recorded papers of remonstrance, which irritate the Native Ruler, & deprive him of all appearance of merit even when he really effects reforms.

I am speaking of what used to go on at Lucknow some years ago.

I have applied to remain here till the 1st of November,

¹ As Resident at Gwalior he received 60,000 rupees a year (£6,000) and at Lucknow 66,000 (£6,600).

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by which time we hope to have a dear infant, about five weeks old.

I am, my dear Dick,
Yours very affectionately,
J. Low.

The baby, another girl, was born at Agra, four months after the death of her sister, from whence the journey was continued by budgerow.¹ On arrival at Lucknow, John wrote to his sister-in-law, after whom the baby was named :

... Our little girl is a remarkably pretty infant. We have an European nurse for her—a corporal's lady whom we picked up at Agra, nearly as great a fool as Mrs. Doggarty, but a good nurse. . . .

(Subsequently Augusta taught the latter to read and write, and was presented for inspection with the first epistle indited to the corporal, which commenced with the words—" Miss Emily is a grat buty.")

It was October before they reached the teeming city (it had nearly a million inhabitants), and settled in at their new home, which John had to furnish at his own expense, when reluctantly leaving the comfortably furnished house provided by Government at Gwalior.

The Residency, a large building—later to become so famous, was three stories high, and commanded a very fine view ; under one of the wings there were subterranean chambers for use in the day-time during the hot season—such rooms being peculiar to the better class of houses in Lucknow. It was close to the Farhat Baksh, the King's principal palace, which consisted of a continuous

¹ Large, commodious house-boats in use on Indian rivers.

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line of palatial buildings stretching along one bank of the Gumti river, and containing not only the royal quarters and harem, with the adjoining courts and gardens, but also the offices of the Ministers of the State.

Within that vast enclosure many tragedies took place of which not the faintest whisper reached the outside world ; for women victims there was no redress, and it was said that many of the cruelties were due to the influence of the eunuchs, of which unfortunate class there were at least 1,500 about the palace.

Except for the fact that Ghazi-ud-din Hyder had been succeeded in 1827 by his son, a far more vicious specimen of the Oriental potentate, the Court of Lucknow was much the same as it had been seventeen years before when Augusta's parents had visited it. The present King—Nasir-ud-din Hyder—was the seventh Nawab of the line and easily the worst. He is described by Sir Henry Lawrence as—

... engaged in every species of debauchery and surrounded by wretches, English, Eurasian & Native, of the lowest description. . . .

Bred in a palace, nurtured by women & eunuchs, he added the natural fruits of a vicious education to those resulting from his protected position.

His Majesty might one hour be seen in a state of drunken nudity, at another he would parade the streets of Lucknow driving one of his own elephants.

In his time all decency . . . was banished from the Court. Such was more than once his conduct that Col. Low, the Resident, refused to see him or to transact business with him.

The animal fights were an even greater feature of Court life than in former days, and during this

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reign a celebrated combat¹ took place between a stallion and a young tiger, in which, strange to relate, the latter fared much the worse.

The stallion was an atrociously savage creature, from which an Englishman, driving with a friend through the streets of the city, barely escaped with his life. Two mangled corpses had already marked his frenzied career.

"He is coming, Sahibs," shouted a trooper from the housetop; far along the road in front of us we could see the wild brute, shaking a child whom he had seized, shaking it savagely. In another moment he had seen the vehicle, threw the child upon the road—dead no doubt, & rushed forward with savage fury to attack us.

They gained an enclosure with iron gates, not a moment too soon:

. . . when the brute galloped up, his head covered with blood, with cocked ears, distended nostrils & glaring eyes.

The King, on being told of this, at once determined to pit the horse against his favourite tiger, and the spectators held their breath during the ensuing duel.

The stallion from the first, stood on the defensive in the centre of the arena, one foot slightly advanced, while the tiger padded silently round and round until ready to spring.

Twice he bounded, making for the head and fore-quarters of his enemy, who however was too adroit, and received the onslaught upon his muscular

¹ The account is given at length in *The Private Life of an Eastern King*, by William Knighton. Many details of life at the Court of Lucknow during this reign, were given to him, when Asst. Commissioner of Oudh in 1860, by one of the parasites formerly attached to the King.

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haunches, lashing out viciously with his heels. Twice the tiger sprawled in the dust, the second time sustaining a broken jaw, and as nothing would induce him to renew the contest, both animals had to be removed by their respective attendants. It was on the opposite bank of the narrow Goomti that the royal menagerie was housed ; there tigers, cheetahs, lynxes, rhinoceroses, and elephants by the score could be seen, and antelopes of all kinds roaming at large. In the Lucknow palaces beauty, as is usual in the Orient, went hand in hand with tawdriness and squalor, but in the gardens pure enchantment reigned. Six years later an English-woman¹ staying at the Residency wrote of the garden of the Farhat Baksh :

... Such a place ! I am sure that this was the "Garden of Delights." There are four small palaces in it, orange trees & roses in all directions, & quantities of parroqueets of bright colours glancing about. And in one palace there was an immense bathroom, the arches intersecting, & the marble inlaid with cornelian & blood-stone ; and in every corner there were little fountains playing.

Even during the hot winds, they say, it is cool from the quantity of water playing.

The description of another garden sounds even more magical :

... By the margin of the Goomti's blue waters, a lovely garden² where the citron, the orange & the lemon mingle with the rose & pomegranate in endless profusion.

¹ The Hon. Emily Eden, of whom more below.

² Knighton (Appendix). The garden is that of the Shah Manzil, the palace built in 1814 for the wives of Ghazi-ud-din Hyder.

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Fountains & statues enliven & adorn this garden, & gold & silver fish flash like molten gold & liquid silver in pools of clearest water.

The Resident, at Lucknow, took the air in a barouche, drawn by four horses, and accompanied by a detachment of the Escort, and John tells his mother that while he always rode in the early morning, he almost invariably accompanied Augusta on her daily drives, yet another palace, that of the Dilkushar (Heart's Delight), which stood in a magnificently timbered park, some two miles beyond the city walls, being their favourite resort in the cool of the evening.

A few months before his arrival Lord William Bentinck had visited Lucknow on a momentous mission—to warn the King that unless there should be an improvement in the administration of the country, all power would be taken from him and vested in the hands of Officers of the Company, the immediate result of which was the recall from exile of the former Minister, Hakim Mehdi, an old acquaintance of John Low's and one of whose abilities he had the highest possible opinion. It was therefore in a sanguine frame of mind that he wrote to Sir John Malcolm,¹ soon after entering upon his new duties.

Nov. 25th, 1831.
MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

. . . I was happy to see that so soon after reaching home you got into the "kush ma kush" of public life again.

I rejoice that you are in your right place as member of the Committee on the Indian Question.

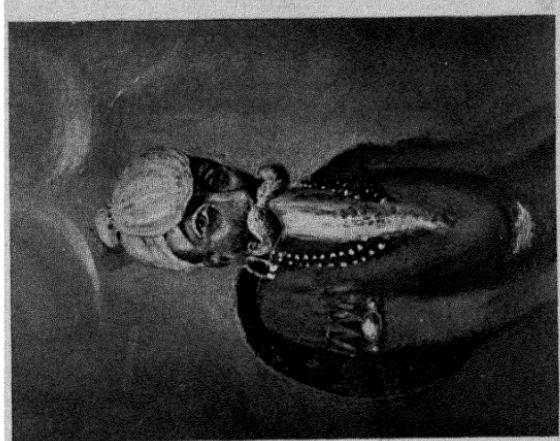
¹ Malcolm was at this time Member of Parliament for Launceston. He died of paralysis on the 30th May, 1833.



SIR JOHN MALCOLM

RANJIT SINGH

From miniatures, by permission of The Royal United Service Institution, (formerly in the possession of John Low)



HAKIM MEHDI

LUCKNOW

I hope among the various changes which will doubtless take place in 1833, that the expediency of there being but one Indian Army & not three separate ones, will not be forgotten.

In going on to discuss the condition of Mysore, he says :

. . . Of this, I am convinced, that if Government had appointed a Resident who was fit for the work, instead of an empty conceited dandy, things would never have come to such a wretched state as to call for the extreme measure of deposing the Rajah.

In this state there was dreadful disorder during several years preceding last January, & Mr. Maddock¹ urged the expediency of doing as was done at Hyderabad ten years ago, but Lord William most properly refused to do so until after a distinct warning had been given without the constant interference & dictation on the part of the Resident, which unhappily has been practised for a long course of years.

The system of friendly co-operation is now under trial in the hands of your pupil, & I am happy to say there is every appearance of its succeeding. . . .

I have no doubt that it will succeed if the present able Minister shall live & retain health for a few years.

My selection for this office was most unexpected, & came from Lord William Bentinck individually.

Mrs. Low, who is well aware of my attachment to you, desires me to send you her affectionate regards. Don't forget to give my regards & best wishes to Lady Malcolm & all your clan.

Believe me always, my dear friend, to be
Yours very affectionately,
J. Low.

¹ Sir Thomas Herbert Maddock, the former Resident—later Political Secretary to Government.

CHAPTER VII

Lucknow, 1832-1833

IN Lucknow all went well in the early part of the year 1832 ; after Hakim Mehdi's return speedy and marked improvements took place in the administration of the country (especially in the matter of systematizing the collection of revenue), and John wrote hopefully to his brother, William :

This state is positively in a more peaceful & flourishing condition than it has been at any time for the last thirty years.

Of his elder nephew he had been able to write home in the preceding winter :

William Deas, I am happy to say, has at last got the Quartermastership of his regiment ; it is a very respectable appointment, & I can truly say that his preferment has been mainly owing to his own merit.

All this will be satisfactory to poor Catherine, whose bad health & difficulties about providing for her son Robert, have given me much concern.

Aunt Hill's generosity towards Georgina quite delights me, & forms a striking contrast to the apathy of Sir William Fettes in all the misfortunes that have occurred to our family in late years.

I have not heard from poor Henry, which greatly surprises me. I cannot say that I anticipate much pleasure in any intelligence he is likely to be able to communicate, yet I am impatient for a communication. Our little darling is, thank God, in perfect health. . . .

LUCKNOW

His first letters to his mother, on taking up his new post, were concerned with his sister's second son, whom, through the Commander-in-Chief, he had arranged to have transferred to a regiment quartered at Lucknow, with permission to live at the Residency and command the Escort.

Jan. 1st, 1832.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

We beg of you to accept our warmest wishes that you may enjoy many happy returns of this day. We are all three quite well here.

Aleck has incurred some little debt again, I find. I don't mean to pay them as I did formerly, but to make him pay me back by deductions from his month's pay, being convinced that this plan will do him more good, & which he can easily do, living at my house.

He is very docile, however, & I hope much from the habits he will acquire during the next three years. Augusta is a first-rate assistant to me in encouraging him to go on with the native languages, which he has recommenced under her superintendence. . . .

I shall continue very anxious till I hear that the winter did not cause any relapse. Pray write as often as you can, yet don't think of giving me any but short letters if it be troublesome to write.

None of the family contrive to fill every letter with so much interesting & amusing matter as you do, but I am not so selfish as to desire it while your hand is crippled with this vile rheumatism. . . .

May 17th, 1832.

. . . You will be happy to hear that an evident improvement is gradually taking place in Aleck Deas' habits, manners & ideas. When with his regiment he used to associate *exclusively* with three or four lads as idle as himself, & *never* went into female society.

All this had given a roughness to his manners which is fast disappearing. I make him attend every Sunday forenoon & join Augusta, our European nurse & myself in reading prayers & portions of the Bible & even that

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seems to have had an influence on his conversation & ways of thinking.

The following, written at this time to Lady Fettes, seems to point to the fact that Sir William, who was fond of discussing his Will, and making many promises in the matter of legacies, was not entirely to blame for ensuing disappointments :

MY DEAREST AUNT, A long time ago you wrote to me to enquire after Mr. Gordon of the 4th Dragoons. Last week I had an opportunity of satisfying myself on the subject of your enquiries by the arrival of an old acquaintance who left Poona only three months since. I mentioned to Captain Jamieson (who is going back to Poona) that Sir William Fettes, who had proved himself Mr. Gordon's best friend in life, was naturally disappointed at hearing so seldom from him, & he promised to remind the youth of his duty on that score.

I am still very uneasy about my beloved mother. . . .

Your affectionately attached nephew,

J. Low.

On June 26th S. E. Low indited one of her long letters at Clatto. William Low, who had been very ill from fever in Scotland, had started on a short trip to the continent.

The Bethunes had suffered from financial losses, and were migrating to Durham, where there were excellent educational facilities for their children, and Colonel Foulis had once more sailed for India, taking with him his eldest son, who had obtained an appointment to the Madras Horse Artillery.

. . . We have had one letter from dear William since he sailed for Malta ; they did not go ashore at Gibraltar. At Malta the ship was in quarantine, but William & another young man got a cottage at a distance & now enjoy themselves. I have not been out yet. I am all rheumatic, but I hope you can read what I write. It

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would be a terrible privation if I could not write—to myself at least.

There were reports that Miss A. Stuart was to be married to George Makgill; he assures his mother that it is not true, & she no longer is in fear of it.

(From a later letter written by John Low to his eldest nephew, it appears that on his return, William Low—a susceptible bachelor of forty—ran a similar risk at the hands of this seductive damsel: “ Both Augusta and I were well pleased when we heard of William’s escape from the hands of Miss Alison Stuart.”)

Last week was Kemback Sacrament, & yesterday dinner at the Manse, which implies a good deal of agreeable conversation, good cheer & wit, which good cheer contributes to inspire.

The Bethunes have parties to-day & to-morrow. They go to Naughton House Thursday and Friday, and dine at Kemback House ¹ on Saturday, so you see there is gaiety in the parish. I am glad Georgina is getting out a little; she has had a long confinement with me.

We shall feel a sad blank when the Bethunes go. They set off on Aug. 6th with intention of remaining five years at Durham. They have got a good house & garden near the Academy.

Mrs. Bruce is not at all well, but a jaunt always does her good, & she is now on one, escorted by a nice young man, Mr. Carnegie, a nephew of Lord Northesk.

Poor Henry used to be her escort. Mr. Cleghorn was here lately, much changed in appearance, but the mind entire & the spirits good.

Foulis & Archie sailed some time ago. Susan, David, Robert & the tutor come here for two months in harvest. It will be agreeable for us to be with each other.

Every day & all day I think of the absent rather than

¹ The properties of Blebo, Kemback, Clatto and Dura were adjoining, and the owners and their families worshipped at the same church and lived in each other’s pockets.

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the present. Remember my love to William Deas when you write ; he has been fortunate ¹ & has made a generous use of his good fortune. Aleck is an affectionate creature & we were great friends, but he is uncouth, & particularly at table. You may tell him I said so & I hope he will correct it. . . .

Susan Foulis, a very strong and uncompromising character, had shut up Cairnie Lodge and moved to Edinburgh for the education of her two younger sons. The elder, David, was qualifying for his medical degree in order to join the Madras Service, and the second was a lad of eleven. She was at this time thirty-nine years old, and still a remarkably handsome woman, a fact of which she thought but little, but when as a girl she first sailed for India, she had been full of life and gaiety, flinging herself into the usual round of amusements, including the mask and fancy-dress balls, which she afterwards reprobated sternly.

Her descendants possess a record of her life written by one of the young men qualifying for the Ministry, who came in succession as tutors to Cairnie Lodge. Pretentious in style and obsequious in spirit, it yet affords some interesting peeps into the family circle, and is, moreover, at times, unconsciously funny.

In dealing with her upbringing, the writer pays a tribute to S. E. Low ; of Doctor Macdonald and his religious instruction he has the lowest possible opinion.

Her mother possessed remarkable ability & shrewdness, & a high degree of culture. She not only managed her domestic concerns, but educated & trained her five

¹ He had drawn winning numbers some months before in both the Calcutta and Madras lotteries.

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daughters, of whom the subject of this memoir was the third.

Besides the ordinary branches of knowledge, she taught them the elements of French, Italian & music, & wisely formed their characters & habits.

Greatly also were her three sons indebted to her maternal tuition until they could travel to & from the parish school & thus prepare themselves for St. Andrews University. . . .

He proceeds with unction :

Mrs. Foulis had been brought up under a system of Christianity known in Scotland by the name of *Moderation*, a system which deadened all spiritual perceptions, lulled the conscience to sleep, & withered the affections to a degree that can scarcely be imagined by those who have listened all their days to evangelical teaching.

The wave of Evangelicalism began to sweep over both England and Scotland earlier than is perhaps generally recognized. The easy Latitudinarianism of the eighteenth century had had its day, and as is usual in all reactions, the swing of the pendulum was violent. Susan had not been long in India before she was overcome with a profound dissatisfaction at her own way of life, although—

. . . some obscurity hangs over the circumstance of her conversion ; it is not known what was the exact turning point.

She read with avidity all that she could lay hands on of the output of new religious literature, and there is a curious glimpse given of the meeting of this earnest young woman on her first return from India with the old minister, who had known her from her cradle.

She reached Scotland in 1820. It was not long after her return that she was joined by her husband. They

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went to Pitcaithley Wells where they met with her parish minister.

She had seen Newton's works advertised in a Perth newspaper, & being desirous to possess them, she asked him to buy them for her.

Looking somewhat sternly at her, he said,—“ Madam, do you know what you are about to do ? These writings are full of fanaticism.”

“ It may be so,” she replied, “ but I have read them already & I wish to possess them.”

When he returned he merely said they were sold, & no further questions were asked.

To her mother, who exercised a softening and to some extent a restraining influence on her too ardent temperament, Susan was deeply attached, and in a letter written in 1826 from Cairnie Lodge to her sister Charlotte, she gave expression to that devotion, as yet unalloyed by the over-anxiety as to spiritual welfare, which later was to mar all her personal relationships.

Our Mother & Georgina are here just now. I cannot say how very much I enjoy their visit. My mother is just as when you left her. I never saw anyone whose conduct I admire so much. How few there are in the world like her !

Her long visit to Clatto in the autumn of this year must in some degree have compensated for the departure of the Bethunes.

Maria was the gentlest and sweetest of S. E. Low's daughters, and never a week passed without visits between the two houses.

Meanwhile, at Lucknow, the baby had been ailing, and the parents determined to send her home. Her father wrote :

I trust that before this day twelve months she will be running about at Clatto.

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At the Court, a dreaded upheaval had taken place: intrigues which had long been hatching against the Chief Minister, at length succeeded, and Hakim Mehdi was summarily dismissed by the King.

September 1st, 1832.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

. . . I have lately had vexatious duties here owing to the folly of the king, who from a feeling of petty jealousy has dismissed his Prime Minister, & but for a dread of me would have imprisoned him & plundered him of his property.

The King is at present in a violent & impotent rage, because I disdained to take an enormous bribe—25 laks of rupees (£250,000), & to lend my aid to his contemptible complicity. As there will now be an indifferent, if not a bad Minister, I shall more labour than I have had hitherto, but I shall get on more smoothly bye & bye, for this silly king has been taught by the late events both to fear & respect me, & in the meantime I have had the most satisfactory despatches from our Government. I annex copies, because I know they will afford you great satisfaction.¹

Adieu, my dearest Mother. . . .

From first to last Nasir-ud-din Hyder was the subject of much animated correspondence with the Government, and a *private* letter, also sent at this time by the Governor-General's Political Secretary,² is couched in far less stately language:

CALCUTTA, Nov. 8th. MY DEAR LOW, Is Rex to get a reply to his letter sent with yours on the 16th Sept.?

I mean, has he been a good boy & deserving of encouragement? If he is to get a reply, would you recommend its being in Persian or English? We have adopted the

¹ The despatches referred to allude to another letter of stern warning sent by Lord William Bentinck to the King.

² William Hay Macnaghten, born 1793, killed at Kabul 1841.

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latter language with all the other Chiefs, sending a Persian translation with our letters.

John Low's belief that, but for his firm attitude, much worse things than banishment would have been perpetrated on the fallen Minister, was fully justified. Hakim Mehdi was worth plundering, and the principal method of extortion was by torture, often of a description that the mind does not care to dwell on.

His pay as Prime Minister was 300,000 rupees, equal to that received by the Governor-General, while his perquisites (which consisted of the deduction of a quarter of all other official salaries) were supposed to have brought him in an additional 1,700,000 yearly, making a total of 2,000,000 rupees (£200,000). An example, of a more sensational nature, of the degradation of a former favourite, in which my grandfather was forced to intervene, took place three years later, although there is no allusion to it in his letters.

The victim, one Rajah Ghalib Jang, the Superintendent of the City Police, had amassed much wealth. On a trumped-up charge he was seized, put into irons and flogged at intervals to make him reveal hidden treasure, and in one of his drinking bouts the King ordered that his right hand and nose should be cut off.

As Prime Minister, Hakim Mehdi had been succeeded by a man of the poorest capacity, one Roshan-ud-daulah, but at this juncture he was able to dissuade his master from a course which he knew would undoubtedly bring about the interposition of the British Government.

The King thereupon commanded that the ladies of the prisoner's household, his mother, wives and

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sisters, should be brought to the palace, and on the following day have their heads shaved, and be stripped and turned naked into the streets.

This was too much for the populace, although no sympathy was felt for the prisoner. Word was sent to the Residency.

The Resident . . . demanded an interview while the King was still in bed. The King was sorely vexed & sent the Minister to request that he would not give himself the trouble to come, if the object was to relieve Ghalib Jang's family, as he would forthwith order the females to be taken to their homes.

The Resident insisted on an audience. He found the King sullen & doggedly silent. The Minister was present & spoke for his master. He denied, what was known to be true, that the prisoner had been kept for two days & two nights without food, but admitted that he had been tied up & flogged severely, & that the females of the family were still there, but he promised to send them back.¹

The result of the interview was, further, that the hardships of the imprisonment were mitigated. Eventually the prisoner was banished, but he survived the King, and returned to Lucknow after the latter's death.

Only sixteen days after the letter telling of Hakim Mehdi's dismissal, John Low wrote again to Clatto, on this occasion, for reasons easily understood, addressing to his sister :

MY DEAREST GEORGINA,

My dear wife & I seem fated to suffer deeply in this world of bitter trials. We are again childless. A sweeter-tempered babe never existed than this little angel. She took all the medicines given to her with such patience as could only be expected of a grown-up person, & her little

¹ *Through the Kingdom of Oudh*, by Major General Sir W. H. Sleeman.

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soul fled to a better place so imperceptibly that we were not aware of it till some minutes, I believe, after it was all over.

To Augusta, at this sad time, it was some consolation that three of her sisters were just arriving in India. On leaving Cheltenham, where she had given birth to a son, Emily Dick and her husband travelled to Perthshire to stay with Sir Robert Dick of Tullymet,¹ and visited both Clatto and Blebo on their way south, thus bringing the latest news of her own and her husband's families.

Emily was accompanied by Charlotte and Marianne Shakespear, which left Selina, of all the brood, alone in England.

Charlotte Ritchie and her husband were now living in Paris, but Emily's uncle, the Rev. Francis Thackeray, had at this time a house in Cadogan Place² which was the rendezvous of the clan. Three years before, he had married her aunt, Mary Anne Shakespear, and with them the Dicks resolved to leave both their children,³ no doubt influenced by the remembrance of four little graves in India. The children of the two families stood to each other in the curious relationship of double first-cousins, once removed. It was on May 31st, 1832, that the departure from London took place, and Selina writes :

I remember William Thackeray at the time my sisters went to India—a young man ; he did for me funny draw-

¹ General Sir Robert Dick—(William Dick's eldest brother), a distinguished Peninsular and Waterloo officer. He fell, commanding the 3rd Infantry Division at the battle of Sobraon.

² As Incumbent of Belgrave Chapel, Halkin Street.

³ The Dicks' baby son died a few months after their departure from scarlet fever.

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ings from the Nursery Rhymes, & after I said goodbye, he somehow was deputed to take me back to school in a hackney coach, & gave me one of Miss Edgeworth's books to console me.

In a later page of her *Reminiscences*, she recounts the loss of these drawings, with another possession—evidently more highly valued :

... In India they were lost, with a very valuable painting of my dear sister Marianne—a study of a Plate of Eggs & Grapes, for which she gained a silver medal from the Royal Society. The Duke of Sussex was to have given the prizes, but was unable to do so.

The Shakespear girls, true to type, thoroughly enjoyed the voyage. In mid-October they anchored off the Sandheads,¹ where—an innovation from earlier arrivals—the vessel was met by a steamer to tow them to Calcutta, which brought a letter of greeting from Lucknow, and to the great delight of the party, contained their brother William, who had come to escort them to Henry Shakespear's house.

Their uncle had been raised in the preceding year to the Bench of the Sudder Adwahlut Court ;² he and his wife, themselves the parents of eleven children, were still living in the house in Park Street which he had shared with his brother, and a warm welcome awaited all that brother's children, as they in turn reached India.

At the time of their arrival, John Low was in

¹ From the Sandheads the distance to Calcutta was about 130 miles of extremely difficult navigation.

² The chief Court under the Company's jurisdiction—for the trial of natives only, the speech being in the vernacular. Europeans were tried in the Supreme Court, which was under the Crown.

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Gwalior ; he had been summoned to meet the Governor-General at Agra and accompany him on a visit to that state, for consultation on some new measures that were being introduced. On his return to Lucknow he learnt that another, and unlooked-for arrival was to be expected in Calcutta.

The errant Henry, who in his mother's opinion had been sinned against, as well as sinning, was now at sea, a chastened man, but confident in his brother's kindness, and John wrote :

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

I had a long letter from Henry dated in July, in which he talked of trying his chance in Calcutta. I have therefore written to a friend to receive him, & will take care that he does not want, & will get him up here & consult with him personally.

My own impression is that I shall give him a sum of money & send him back to Van Diemen's Land.

His thoughts were ever hovering round his Scotch home and he wrote at this time to General Bethune :

4th Jan., 1833.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

In the course of the next month I expect to complete the sum arranged for Mrs. Low's marriage settlement, [he had arranged, in correspondence with her guardian, Henry Shakespear, to settle £8,000 on his wife] & my next object will be to save £5,200 to redeem the mortgage.

There is another point. I allude now to the possibility of losing my beloved Mother before the debt on Clatto can be paid off.

If I should outlive her, my wish is that my sisters Catherine & Georgina shall take possession of the house, rent free, & also of the garden, out-offices & parks which are now under her management, & I beg of you, my dear General, to adopt such measures as may be requisite.

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Immediately that I should receive the necessary information I could remit the interest, & probably a considerable portion of the principal.

I deeply regret the misfortune that has driven you away from Blebo, both on your own account & my poor Mother's. Few people, however, have more sound & practical philosophy, & I trust that she will still pass the time with cheerfulness.

In the following month his mother wrote again :

Feb. 13th, 1833.

MY DEAREST JOHN, I had the happiness of receiving yours of the 1st September, including copies of despatches from Government, & the anecdote of the rupees ; thank God you acted as you did, for what would it avail if you gained the whole world yet lost your own soul.

I have been prevented writing you till I should see the termination of a disagreeable affair.

Robert Deas was expelled from Addiscombe at the beginning of the Christmas Vacation, for repeated acts of drunkenness, & it was only two days ago that we heard that the Directors confirmed the sentence.

Poor Catherine believed to the last that they would restore him, but the thing was morally impossible. Colonel Houston was most lenient to him, but the habit is of long standing, & I fear will be difficult to cure.

I never knew that he had that habit till a few weeks before he was expelled, but as I could not suppose that he would indulge in it at Addiscombe, I never dreamt of his being expelled. I could only deplore his sad infatuation. William went to Edinburgh yesterday to try & settle what is now to be done.

Perhaps we may have reason to be thankful that the disgrace fell upon him here, for I don't find that he took it so seriously as he should have done, thinking, like poor Catherine, that he was sure of being restored.

16th Feb. William returned from Edin^r. yesterday, & by Robert Deas' own desire brought him with him.

I confess when I first heard of his arrival I was truly sorry for myself, but I am reconciled to it ; if it contributes to his reformation, it will be well bestowed. There are some hopes of getting him into a Mercantile House in

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Liverpool, where he can have no emolument for six years, but merely to learn the business. I cannot describe the state of mind Catherine is in, but I hope a little quiet will restore her bodily health ; her feelings with regard to Robert will depend on his conduct.

Henry Low's ship reached Calcutta in March, and on April 6th, John wrote to his mother to say that he had sent him several letters of introduction, including one to Lord William Bentinck—

although I had very little hope that his Lordship could do anything for him, so very difficult is it to do anything for a person who does not belong to any branch of the Company's Service.

What a sad omission it was on the part of your kind friend, Mr. Cleghorn, not to send a note of introduction for General Bourke to Henry himself, so that he could have waited upon the General to present it ! . . .

As it still seems possible that Henry may return to N.S. Wales, I wish much that Mr. Cleghorn would still kindly write a short note (which you should send to *me* in the first instance) merely to say that it will be presented by Mr. H. M. Low, concerning whom he wrote to him formerly. I now enclose Henry's reply to my letter, which I think will be satisfactory to you for it shows an honorable feeling.

From Henry to John Low.

CALCUTTA, 1st April, 1833.

MY DEAR JOHN,

I received your kind & generous letter last night & cannot express how grateful I feel both for your acts & intentions. Were my situation different I should never hesitate between India & Australia, but I am extremely unwilling to give up all hope of retrieving myself without a struggle.

Now I think, with a constitution unimpaired by intemperance or disease, I might, if I can possibly obtain a start, effect the object of my wishes before completing the allotted age of man, & at all events dying in the attempt is infinitely preferable to accepting a life of ease in N.S.

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Wales, under the conviction of the impossibility of making anything like a composition for my debts at the end of 30 years.

I have at present no occasion for your draft, indeed nothing but necessity shall induce me to encroach on it. After paying my passage & outfit at Sydney, I had about £30 over. Our passengers were Officers of King's Corps, who had come out with convict guards, & were proceeding to join their regiments.

This had thrown me a little among military men here—among others I met with Captain Smith of the 38th, who begged to be remembered to Mrs. Low & you.

He was on his way home & I regretted seeing so little of him as he appeared to be much superior to the average of officers in Marching Regiments.

He talked of having spent some very happy days with you, & said that Mrs. Low was the only lady he had met with in India who was totally free from affectation.

This is however too severe a libel on the fair ones of the East, at least if it is not so, some of those I have met with at home must have left it behind them. . . .

I am ever, my dear John

Your most affectionate brother,

HENRY M. LOW.

P.S. I had forgotten Aleck Deas was with you. I hope he is improved & well. Pray give him my love.

After much correspondence it was decided that Henry should be articled to a firm of solicitors in Calcutta, after first travelling to Lucknow to pay his brother a visit. The Dicks were still at Calcutta, where Charlotte Shakespear—five months after her arrival in India—had been married from her uncle's house to a young Bengal Civilian, James Crawford. In the opinion of her cousin, William Ritchie, she was the prettiest of the sisters.¹ She was the only one to marry a man

¹ She died in Burma at the age of thirty-six, leaving eight children.

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near to herself in age, and her lot in life was less smooth in consequence.

To his mother, John wrote, enclosing a letter from William Dick about his brother, and a further letter from Henry himself :

... The profession Henry has chosen is one in which there is no risk of losing money. He must serve three years before he can be admitted to practice on his own account, but with 200 rupees a month which I have given him, he can with prudence be independent during that time. . . .

Many a man makes a very good income at Calcutta without any capital to commence with. I find that the appointment to practice does not rest with the Court of Directors. It depends upon the Judges at Calcutta & I think there will be little or no difficulty in getting his nomination after the three years of probation shall expire.

From William Dick to John Low.

... To-day your brother called & stayed about an hour, & has promised to dine with us to-morrow evening. He is not so tall as either your brother or yourself, but there is a strong family likeness ; his manners are mild & gentlemanly with a melancholy cast, which however lessened as he engaged in conversation.

I only regret the impossibility of having him in our house (which would be the proper place for a brother of yours). The Hallidays occupy our only spare rooms, & after they leave they will be required for the young couple. We shall however endeavour to impress upon him the welcome he will always meet with in this house. I can quite understand the uneasiness you must have suffered in consequence of the misfortunes of this brother, whose prospects at one time were so bright, & who was so much beloved by his family in Scotland. I trust he may still do well, he has life before him & his talents are good.

From Henry to John Low.

MY DEAR JOHN,

While with Captain Benson, a message was sent me by Lord William that he would be happy to see me at ten,

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on the following day. Yesterday, therefore, I made my appearance, & his lordship's manner was at once affable & cordial, though he candidly stated that he could do nothing for me.

The conversation turned from you to N.S. Wales, then to my own views & intentions here. I sat with him for half an hour, & he gave no intimation of shortening the interview, but deeming this a long interruption of his time, I then withdrew. . . .

Two Officers of the 44th, now in the Fort, go to Cawnpore as soon as the river opens, & they wish me to make a third. I need not say how anxious I am to see you & Mrs. Low, so pray write if you approve.

I have met with a most kind reception from Mr. & Mrs. Dick. I had previously remarked her as the most lady-like woman on the Course¹ without knowing who she was. You may judge of my agreeable surprise when I found who the face belonged to.

Henry reached Lucknow in August, and John wrote home :

For several days past Henry has been an inmate of our house. I fully believe that he is determined to be industrious & strictly economical. In the latter respect his management has been quite extraordinary ; he seems to have nothing now of that over-sanguine feeling from which many of his former misfortunes proceeded.

Three months before—on May 4th—a third baby had been born to Augusta—another daughter, who lived to become the light of her father's eyes. He wrote to his mother :

The infant is manifestly larger & stronger than either of our lamented lost ones & I would fain hope that, under Providence, our chances are better of preserving her to be a comfort to us to the end of our lives.

¹ The main driving road, on which, after sunset and in the cool of the morning, Calcutta society took its airings.

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Mrs. Mill was nominated as one of the child's godmothers, the other being a Mrs. Herbert—a friend on the spot, and she was accordingly christened by the names of Charlotte, Herbert.¹

The fairies brought many gracious gifts to little Charlotte's cradle—both charm and beauty, a nature formed to give and attract affection, a happy girlhood, an ardent lover, happy marriage, but the gift of long life was withheld. Within a month of her birth, the anxious father was considering ways and means of getting her out of India.

His first idea was to send both wife and child to Scotland, and for the former, after a few months' stay at Clatto, to return to India escorted by his brother, but a little later, every detail for the baby's solitary journey had been thought out; Augusta would not consent to leave her husband:

LUCKNOW, Sept. 11th, 1833.

MY DEAR WILLIAM,

I have applied for leave to Calcutta, & we hope to embark the dear little pet on the *Hungerford* (your friend Farquharson) on the 10th of January; we trust to your coming up to London to escort the child to Clatto, & if Mill be not ill at the time, I daresay Charlotte will kindly accompany you, or perhaps Georgina.

However if it be inconvenient for any of the female part of the family, it will not be *necessary*, for the child is to be under the charge of a servant, a Mrs. Mackenzie, who has been engaged to take her all the way to Clatto, if required to do so by my London agents, Fletcher, Alexander & Co.

She took home two of our friend Agnew's children & gave entire satisfaction, & I intend to write to Agnew to ask that he will take charge of little Charlotte till you arrive in town. If unluckily both he & Mrs. Agnew are

¹ Charlotte Herbert Low (1833-1853), wife of Sir John Theophilus Metcalfe, Bart.

LUCKNOW

from town when the *Hungerford* shall arrive, Fletcher & Alexander will be able to tell you where the child may be, but I am in hopes that you will contrive to be in town yourself.

You may be almost sure that the ship will arrive between the 10th & 20th of May, & the weather will then be so favourable that you may safely take Mrs. Mackenzie & the child home by steamer.

CHAPTER VIII

Lucknow, 1834-1836

FROM a reference in a later letter it appears that William Low successfully escorted his niece to Clatto, by which time he was a married man. His wife's father—Alexander Gibson Hunter of Blackness (Midlothian)—was dead, and she had been for some time living with her mother in Edinburgh. Her brother was his dearest friend. William Deas had now reached Scotland on long leave.

CLATTO, *Nov. 6th, 1833.*

MY DEAREST JOHN,

. . . William was at Blackness lately ; Miss Hunter was at that time on a visit to her brother. She is now at her mother's in Edin^r. William went with her & everything is to be settled before his return.

Miss Hunter is not handsome, but pleasing in her appearance,—her age twenty-seven.

William Deas is here at present, he is a keen sportsman, but too much disappointed when not successful. Robert Deas is giving satisfaction where he is boarded, but what is to be done with him I don't know.

Nov. 7th. William returned yesterday ; the marriage is intended to take place the 21st. After the ceremony, the company, which is to be numerous, remain the evening.

It is the present fashion to have an immense number of friends at marriages. Major Dalgairn is to be Best Man, & Miss Gibson Maitland, cousin to the bride, is to be bride maid.

Nov. 22nd. William & Georgina went to Edin^r. on the 17th ; Jessy Cleghorn here. On the 20th, Deases,

LUCKNOW

Foulises, Malcolms, two Hunters & Major Dalgairn dined at Mr. Mill's to be near Mrs. Hunter, Princes Street. At seven in the evening the ceremony took place. William Deas writes that he thought about fifty people were present.

The happy couple set off immediately after, with fine moonlight & lamps burning upon their jaunt; William Deas adds, "And a pair of capital horses."

Lady Fettes was at the marriage, looking well. Sir William was ailing, which would disappoint him for he was bent upon the *ploy*.

The new married-pair are to be absent more than a fortnight, during which time they visit two of her uncles in Angus, & Brechin Castle, Lord Panmuir [Panmure],¹ formerly Mr. Maule, who is one of the Hunters' guardians, & is married for the second time to a cousin of Mrs. William Low's.

I think it may amuse you to have the history of that marriage. A Miss Hunter of Blackness, an aunt of the present family, thought proper to marry a common soldier, consequently was thrown off by the family.

She returned with a daughter, & they received her. The daughter, very young, visited frequently at Brechin Castle, & Lord Panmuir, then Mr. Maule, married her. She was supposed to have a good deal of spirit, & people thought she would rule him. I suppose he had some idea of the same, & acted precisely "Petruchio" the first night of the marriage. Whether that had a good effect I don't know, but she bears her honours meekly & I believe he is a good husband.

I was telling William that if he is what he used to be, it would give him great pleasure to make him drunk, so William is aware of him.

Do you remember a Hunter² who was at St. Andrews

¹ The Hon. William Maule, second son of George eighth Earl of Dalhousie, created Baron Panmure in 1831. He was uncle to the first Marquess of Dalhousie, Governor-General of India.

² This Hunter is referred to in a letter of Sir Walter Scott's (in 1806): "Constable goes on to improve in circumstances, trade and size. He has associated with him young Hunter of Blackness, who, bringing £3,000 or £4,000 to the stock, has enabled him to outdo his former outdoings."

FIFTY YEARS WITH JOHN COMPANY

when you were there ? He is an uncle of Mrs. William Low's & now a bookseller in London. . . .

I mean to write Henry ; what a blessing if he really sees the wrong manner he has acted in. I am sure he will be grateful to you & Augusta, for I must always give the wife praise when the husband is generous to his relations.

William and his wife returned to Clatto for a long visit before embarking for the East in the autumn of 1834, at which time the kind old family friend, Mrs. Bruce, died at her home, 20 Charlotte Square, bequeathing a ring to S. E. Low, and a hundred pounds to every member of the family.

In India the Residency had lost one happy-go-lucky inmate, for young Deas had rejoined his regiment, and on March 7th of this year (1834) Marianne Shakespear was married at Allahabad, where William Dick now had an appointment, to Major A. Irvine,¹ of the Bengal Engineers, a man of thirty-seven, who had already had a distinguished military career. Soon after the wedding she and her husband paid a visit to her sister at Lucknow.

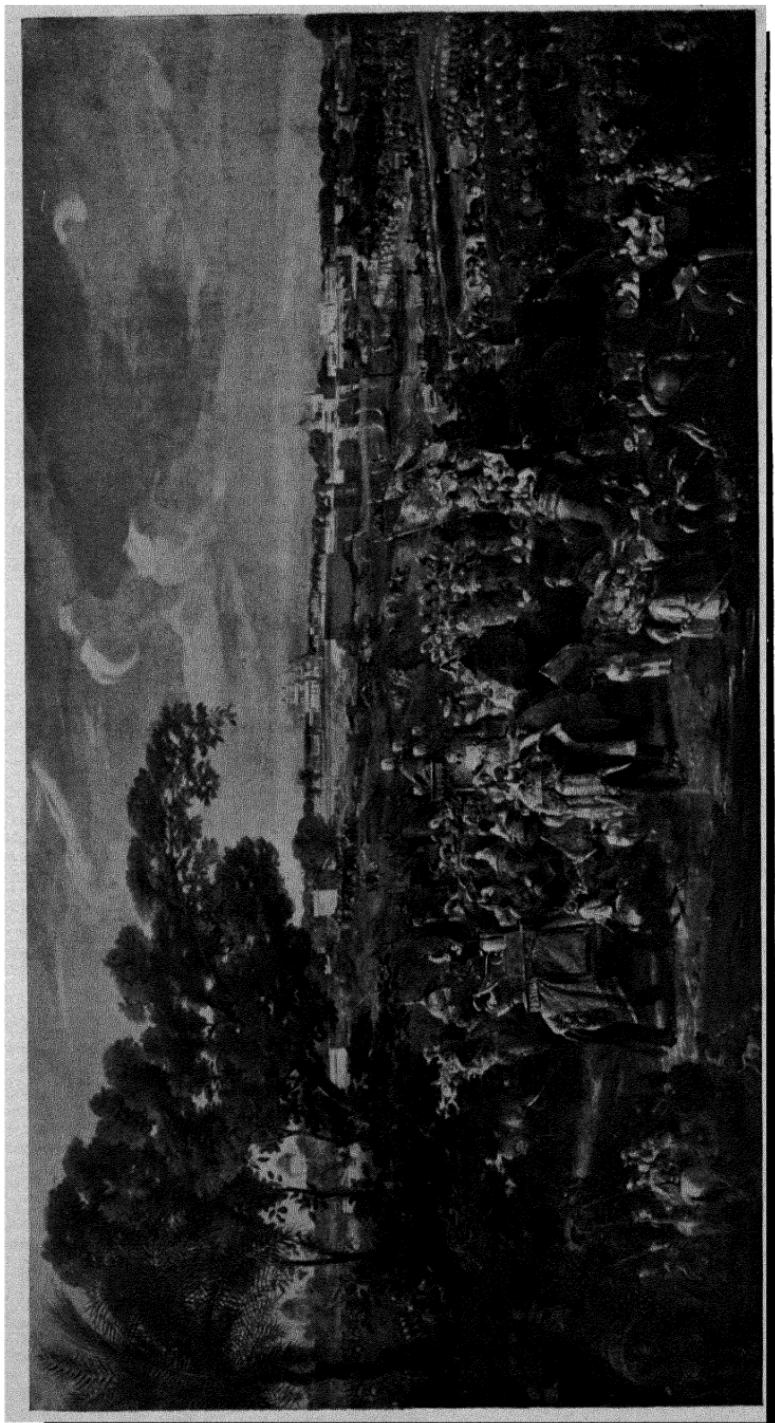
In the south, Colonel Foulis took the field for the last time on April 2nd, accompanied by his young son, of whom John writes :

All accounts concur in making Archy out to be a very fine youth. Would that Aleck Deas was like him !

The horribly cruel rule of the Rajah of Coorg ² necessitated armed intervention, and the force

¹ In 1825, Archibald Irvine had been appointed Brigade Major of Engineers under Lord Combermere at the siege of Bhurtpore, and succeeded in breaching the hitherto impregnable walls, for which service he was rewarded by a Brevet Majority and a C.B.

² A territory adjoining Mysore.



JOHN LOW NASIR-UD-DIN HYDER

AUGUSTA LOW, MARIANNE IRVINE
AND A FRIEND

PUBLIC RECEPTION OF LT.COL. LOW AT LUCKNOW BY HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF OUDH, 4TH MARCH, 1834
From the picture by A. Dufay de Casanova, at Buckingham Palace. By gracious permission of His Majesty The King

LUCKNOW

(under Brig.-General Lindsay), which had to march through forest country and by blind mountainous tracts, was divided into four sections, the western column under Foulis, fighting its way to the objective successfully and with few casualties. Nine months later he sailed for home on his final voyage.

In May, John was able to tell his mother that he had secured his Lieutenant-colonelcy—"a grand step in these *reducing times*" :

We have not yet heard a word of our little darling, but nothing but the improbable chance of the ship meeting another & being able to pass letters to & fro could have rendered it possible.

On June 29th he wrote again. The family had at this time many correspondents both at home and in India, and every letter appears to have been circulated round the entire circle :

. . . We have received five or six letters within the last week from Clatto & Edinburgh.

Poor Catherine's health appears to be permanently delicate which grieves me much, especially so in consequence of Robert's misconduct.

Sickness *for a time* often does people a great deal of good. I can speak from personal experience, for I feel that I have been both a better & a really happier man since the illness that I experienced in 1821, 1822 & 1823. . . . That particular change is still greater however since my union with Augusta.

To William Deas, he wrote a few days later to tell the family of the death of John Mill's brother :

Poor Charles Mill's fate was a melancholy one—killed in a jungle fight & an unsuccessful one ; he is extremely regretted by the whole of his regiment. I enclose a newspaper report which you can give to Charlotte.

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An interesting description ¹ of this Scotch officer—a veritable father to his regiment—is given in a book written by a young Frenchman—*L'Inde Anglaise en 1843*.

Warren's father, an Irishman, had fought under the Duke of Wellington in India, but his mother was French and he had been educated in France. Coming out to India in 1832 to look for an appointment, he learnt that a second-lieutenancy had fallen vacant in H.M.'s 55th Regiment of Foot, and on forwarding his Memorial for the vacancy, was allowed to purchase the commission for the sum of 11,000 francs.

He joined the regiment at Bellary in September of that year and thus describes his first meeting with his Colonel :

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mill was about fifty years of age ; his pale bronzed complexion indicated long service in unhealthy tropical climates. He was a veteran of the army of Spain, whose whole life had been spent in the field, & who felt uncomfortable in a drawing-room.

His penetrating eyes were filled with intelligence, but a rather awkward nervousness caused him often to lower them. . . .

A Scot, with the excessive patriotism of his race, he had learned on twenty battle-fields to respect the French without having been able to learn to love them. He had been tossed about too much from hemisphere to hemisphere to find leisure to marry, & he lavished the super-abundance of his affection on a young fellow-countryman, a distant relative, for whom he had long been trying to secure the post of second-lieutenant that had been given to me, & who had been serving for the past two years at his own expense. . . .

Nevertheless he received me with the most exquisite

¹ Given in *Bygone Days in India*, by Douglas Dewar (John Lane The Bodley Head Ltd.), Chap. 18, p. 227.

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politeness. . . . He welcomed me to the regiment, hoped my journey had been pleasant, & let fall a few words about the course of instruction & the military tests I should have to pass, & finally spoke jocularly of the strictness of the discipline of the 55th, & the importance of my meriting the approbation of the Adjutant.

A few letters written by S. E. Low in 1835 are the first to make mention of the little granddaughter (now two years old) at Clatto. By this time the growing discontent in the Established Church, which eight years later was to culminate in the Disruption, was gathering weight, and had reached the quiet parish of Kemback, where Doctor Macdonald, a good and kindly man, had ministered for a life-time to the needs of his poorer parishioners.

March 13th, 1835.

Little darling Charlotte in high health & spirits. She is tall of her age & carries breadth along with it. Doctor Macdonald has had a long & dangerous illness, but is now thought out of danger.

We may all thank God for his recovery upon many accounts ; had he died, some of the parish were determined to make objection to any successor put in by patronage ; a great proportion of the Scotch nation are what is called " voluntaries "—that is they want to put down the Established Church, & would no doubt proceed to the state.

Doctor Haldane, one of the Principals, St. Andrews, was here some days ago with a paper for all well-wishers of the Established Church to sign, in order to petition Parliament for additional churches, there not being sufficient to accommodate the population.

I & all my people signed. Upon looking over their signatures, I was entertained by our home servant denominating himself *Butler at Clatto*.

He takes care of our only horse, goes for coals, helps in the garden, has the charge of the back-court, now in shrubs, grass & flowers, drives the droskey, etc., etc.

FIFTY YEARS WITH JOHN COMPANY

Dec. 5th, 1835.

... Darling Charlotte is in high health & spirits, just gone out to walk & the day delightful. Her frock is a very pretty one which came with her, & never was peacock more proud of his radiant tail. She turned herself round to shew it when she came into my room this morning.

I asked her in French if she was going to walk to-day. Her answer was—"J'irai s'il fait beau"; you must not imagine from this that she knows a great deal of French, she merely answers questions she has been taught, but she has a great collection of words which she uses of herself. She prays for you both every night before leaving my room. She really is not spoiled. I shall give you an instance; she has a little fork which she uses sometimes when she comes into the dining-room after dinner. The other day she thought proper to scratch the table with it, & when she was forbid, did it again, so I took it from her.

When she went to the nursery she addressed a doll she calls Grania: "Now, Grania, you behaved very ill about the fork, if you had been quiet you would have got it again, but instead of that you roared."

By this you see she knows what is right, & indeed in general behaves remarkably well upon privations, which all children must meet with sometimes.

Mr. McClay,¹ who is to take our little darling's likeness has been prevented by illness, he comes at Xmas.

Lady Fettes pretty well at present, Sir William in good health, but feeble; he is to leave *all* his property to build a Lunatic Asylum, & I believe speaks openly of it. Mrs. Hill is quite well; she sent me fifty pounds lately which I have laid out in new furnishing the white room. It was very generous in Mrs. Hill, she knows that I am extremely well off, but that does not prevent her from making me a valuable present.

The reformers of this parish were full of intentions to oppose whoever the University might appoint, but thank God, the Doctor recovered.

I said to one of the said reformers—"You may qualify

¹ Kenneth McLeay—1802-78—(S. E. Low never by any chance succeeded in the correct spelling of a surname). Best known by his drawings of Highlanders, but did many charming water-colour portraits of children in Scotland.

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it to yourself as you please, but lay your hand on your heart & say that you did not wish the good Doctor in his grave." His face flushed, & he made no answer. The great bulk of the people do not content themselves with village vices, petty iniquities & vulgar sins, but aspire to rule Church & State.

The Duke & Duchess of St. Albans¹ made a tour through Scotland lately, & were several days at Balcarres. She is plain, & for age looks as if she might be his mother ; she is lively, talks much, & says she has a warm heart to Scotland on Mr. Coote's account. The Duke must be a poor creature to marry her, but they say there is nothing particularly so in his appearance.

They travel with a great retinue, amongst the rest two physicians. It seems the Duke is subject to fits.

She told them that when the Reform Bill was pending, the Duke of Sussex called upon her, & said if she did not get the Duke to vote for it her coronet might be taken from her.

She told him she did not care for the coronet if they left her her little *shop* in — St. (I forget the name)—she meant her Banking House of course, for she enjoys Coote's share.

In a later controversy with her son, S. E. Low proved adamant :

MY DEAREST JOHN,

Never speak of remuneration for little Darling's servant & clothes, in the first place she brought great store of the

¹ The ducal retinue sorely taxed the hospitality of Abbotsford. The lady, who had been an actress before her marriage to the wealthy Mr. Coutts, was a genuine friend of Sir Walter's, who in his journal of Nov., 1825 (after she had twice refused the Duke), wrote : " It is the fashion to attend Mrs. Coutts' parties and to abuse her. I have always found her a kind friendly woman . . . She can be very entertaining too, as she speaks without scruple of her stage life. So much wealth can hardly be enjoyed without some ostentation. But what then ? If the Duke marries her, he ensures an immense fortune ; if she marries him she has the first rank. If he marries a woman older than himself by twenty years, she marries a man younger in wit by twenty degrees."

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latter with her, & at all events I am quite able to get every desirable accommodation both for my own & her little needs.

The weather has been snowy, & the roads bad, so she has been dressed as if for going out, the drawing-room windows opened, & she & her maid have walked there the usual time for some days.

Doctor Grace (the St. Andrews physician) happened to call when she was at her walk, & he thought it an excellent plan.

Little darling's dress upon the occasion is a crimson pelisse, snow boots, angola gloves & a beaver bonnet, & she comes in as fresh as a rose.

During this year affairs at Lucknow were going from bad to worse, and the deposition of the King was only averted by the patience of the Resident, and the reluctance of the Government to proceed to extreme measures. The King's health, too, gave rise to anxiety, and the question of the succession was fraught with danger. He had repudiated his heir, a boy named Moona Jan, and there were factions at the Court, which was a hotbed of intrigue. The question of this child's paternity must always remain doubtful.¹ At the palace he was generally considered to be the King's son, but in 1832 Nasir-ud-din had forced the Governor-General's hand by affixing public placards in the city affirming that the boy was in no way related to himself, and the Government thereupon adopted as his successor his worthy, but elderly and decrepit uncle, Nasir-ud-daulah.

¹ In 1827 the King had proclaimed as his heir-apparent another boy, informing the Governor-General that he was his eldest son, although it was well known that this child was three years old when his mother was brought into the palace. In 1832 he repudiated both children.

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In January (1835) John Low wrote to his mother from Calcutta to say that he had been summoned there "on heavy and responsible business." He was regretfully taking leave of the Governor-General, who, after seven years' term of office, was leaving India.¹

I wish, my dear Mother, you would write a letter to Lord William Bentinck, thanking him for the great kindness he has bestowed upon me. Independently of the promotion, both he & Lady William Bentinck treated me as an intimate personal friend, & I feel greatly attached to them both.

Of his youngest brother he was able to send a good report :

Henry is looking remarkably well. He lives most quietly & does not seem to have the least disposition to extravagance.

He takes a long walk in the morning, is in the office all day, & generally speaking does not go out to parties, tho' often asked by some of Augusta's connections, Dr. & Mrs. Halliday & Mr. Henry Shakespear. In short, Henry is going on in the quiet & prudent way which is right in his circumstances.

P.S. May God bless you my dearest Mother. Augusta is as regular as I am in her daily prayers & in her most sincere thanks to you for all your kindness to her little infant.

At this time the post of Second Assistant at the Lucknow Residency fell vacant.

Aleck Deas did not possess the necessary qualifications, and John wrote regretfully to his sister to say that all that he could do for the lad was to

¹ Lord William's administration had been beneficent, and especially notable for two great reforms—that of the abolition of suttee, and the suppression of the Thugs.

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make him welcome at any time when on leave. Reports had come from Saugor where he was quartered that he had entirely given up all study :

... In speaking to the sepoys & his servants he gets on *remarkably well*, but this will not entitle him to any situation out of the common routine.

I sincerely hope that you have had satisfactory accounts from Canada.¹

I am, my dearest Catherine,
Your very affectionate brother,
J. Low.

The appointment was given to Augusta's eldest brother, who had been continuously in the country since getting his commission in the Company's Foot Artillery in 1824. Eight of John Talbot Shakespear's children were now in India ; the four sons, with their four married sisters, and numerous connections, could be sure of finding kindred and a welcome in most of the large cities of India. They were an affectionate family, in spite of having had no common family home ; they shared the same tastes, all being artistic, and fond of their pens, tossing off light verses, then so much the vogue, with great facility.

A ripple of amusement had spread amongst the brethren, when, on Augusta's marriage, a letter had come from a former mistress at Mrs. Ludlam's Establishment, beseeching her to be kind to her " Indian slaves."

When he was settled in at the Residency, John Shakespear wrote to his sister Marianne, who was

¹ This is the last allusion in the correspondence to Catherine's unfortunate youngest son, and beyond the fact that he died very young, nothing is known of his fate.

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just nineteen. Major Irvine's new position—that of Stipendiary Member of the Military Board—necessitated much entertaining :

LUCKNOW, *July 26th, 1835.*

. . . I was much amused at the idea of your taking the accounts & superintending household affairs. Pray don't you feel terribly bewildered sometimes ?

The ordering of those large dinners must, I suppose, throw you into a dreadful state of agitation. Do you recollect how nervous the dear old lady [Emily Dick] was on the occasion of any grand feast ?

How much, much more alarming it must be for you, a beginner !

As to taking accounts, I should recommend you to adopt William's plan, which is simple & efficacious, viz., after looking them over, to pronounce in a decided & authoritative voice—"Adha Katto"—(deduct half).

With regard to servants, when they happen to be troublesome, I always advise Augusta to take off a few of their heads, which she could easily do, being a Barbaree Queen & in an Independent State ; in Calcutta there might be some little difficulty against so summary a mode of punishing the contumacious.

I can therefore only suggest the administering of some of the ferocious slaps which the Ludlam, in days of yore, knew so well how to apply to the cheeks of her rebellious pupils.

His brother William had been recently on a visit to the Residency, and the letter continues :

Barring the time that William was engaged in painting (which was considerable), he managed to keep pretty free of reverie.

Augusta, it seems, had sacrificed herself in the cause of sisterly affection, sitting for her portrait for five or six hours a day, and he concludes that it was well that his brother's leave was not longer or :

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painter & *model*, as Mr. Casanova¹ styled Augusta in her capacity of sitter, (the “*mo*” being pronounced long)—must have expired.

In a later letter he dilates on the comfort of the underground rooms in which they could spend the hot hours of the day in comparative coolness :

... Augusta has grown much stouter ; she would be considered anywhere a fine-looking woman.

Low is a man of great ability, with the finest disposition in the world & has been a warm friend to me.

In the autumn the house was full of young life. William Shakespear arrived on a second visit, and was joined by his brother George, the only Civilian of the family, who was then Registrar at Dinajpur. It was a happy gathering, for William had just obtained a good appointment—that of Adjutant and Quartermaster of the 3rd Brigade, Horse Artillery, but within a few days of his arrival he died of fever.

He is described by his brother-in-law as “ one of the most amiable and honourable young men I have ever seen.”

To his mother, John Low wrote :

I am thankful to say that Augusta’s health does not seem to have been injured by her depression ; she is within five or six weeks of her confinement.

On John Shakespear the loss fell hardest ; only one year had separated the brothers.

¹ An European painter was always attached to the King’s entourage. The Italian—A. Dufay de Casanova—had been preceded by a German, of the name of Grutte. In earlier days Zoffany had visited Lucknow and two fine paintings of his hung in the Dilkushar Palace.

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The baby was born a month later, and on November 9th the news was sent to Clatto :

I write this via Bombay to announce the birth of your grandson. The little boy, born on the 6th, is a fat, stout child.

The Dicks came to Lucknow for the christening, bringing with them the youngest of the Shakespear brothers—also an Artilleryman—who was quartered at Allahabad (where he shared their bungalow) and the child received the names of William Malcolm,¹ the latter name, by which he was always called, being given to him in memory of his father's devoted attachment to Sir John Malcolm. Of Richmond Shakespear, at this time twenty-three years old, to whom all the family were devoted, his eldest brother wrote to Selina :

He must be much altered from what he was when you knew him ; he is now six feet two inches in height & stout in proportion, sports large whiskers, is very intelligent & has a great flow of spirits.

At this time the sketches and plans which my grandfather had asked for, arrived from Scotland. To William Deas, he had written of the difficulties of his position :

... I am keeping health admirably here, but the moment I can have £1,200 a year, I shall be delighted to quit all this pomp & gingerbread "dignity of office."

¹ William Malcolm Low (Bengal Civil Service). Married in 1872, Lady Ida Feilding, daughter of William Basil, seventh Earl of Denbigh. Retired from India in 1876 on account of ill health. Unionist M.P. for Grantham 1886-92. Died 1923.

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He now, in his leisure hours, found delightful relief in the planning of structural and other alterations at Clatto. William Low had returned to Madras, and he and the new sister-in-law, who appears to have been of the practical outdoor type, in which our island excels, were called into consultation. Extracts from their letters were sent on to his mother :

From Mrs. William Low, 1st September, 1835.

We have been very attentively examining the plans of Clatto, & if our assistance is of the least use we will be greatly pleased.

William thinks the drawing very correct. Upon the plan you will see we have drawn a new line of approach, yours was too much *uphill*.

We think your planting out the offices or steading an immense improvement ; indeed the idea of planting them out often occurred to me at home, but the Blackness garden is alas ! a small thing.

General Bethune years ago advised your mother to put trees there, but as the ground was not kept open by trenching they made little progress.

When I became one of the Clatto family, I asked your mother to give me the liberty of planting in my own way, so the gardener trenched it & we filled it with different evergreen trees, which made progress even before I left Scotland. . . .

Clatto is a most comfortable place, & with a few judicious improvements will be a most desirable habitation. Your worthy mother & Georgina keep it in the best order. . . .

Extract from William's letter.

The foregoing long story Margaret & I concocted between us. She took as much interest in Clatto & all concerning it, when there, as I did, & has still the same warm affection for it.

Letters from Lucknow to Clatto were very frequent at this time, the topic being so absorbing,

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and the following, written one month later, is perhaps of interest as showing the simpler household arrangements which prevailed a hundred years ago :

MY DEAREST MOTHER,

Along with my letter of the 18th inst, I wrote a private one about water closets. [Of this there is no copy.] This also is private, that is to say that I have not told Augusta of them.

My reason is, that when we were talking of alterations at Clatto, she said that she would much like to have more closets, but that she was afraid that it might appear strange to you that we should not be satisfied as the house suited you as it is, but I feel sure that this will not vex you at all.

The change would prove, some two years hence, a very agreeable surprise to her.

After giving directions as to the situations of the proposed new installations, which were to be placed in, or adjoining existing dressing-rooms, he continues :

It is of great convenience that there should be both inside & outside doors to closets, the outside ones for servants to take water into & out of them without coming into people's bedrooms.

The outside doors should be made to keep shut by means of a weight, rope & pulley. This is to prevent people ever seeing them from the public stair.

Each of the new closets that I want made will be sufficiently large to have a tin (shoe) bath, or a wooden one in it. I am very partial to frequent bathing & consider it often a great preservative of health.

The whole space should be raised a foot or more above the present floors, excepting a few feet near the doors to allow them to be opened, & also to admit of the servants placing pails at the edge of the stage, to carry off the water from the bathing tubs.

The stage part should be completely covered with tin,

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well laid down & soldered in order to prevent any water finding its way into the lower rooms, & for the same purpose the tin covering of the stage should have a raised ledge of two or three inches all along the borders, having one hole & a cock (at the corner), through which the water would run into the pails.

I could easily make the western wing, now used for drying & ironing clothes, into a comfortable bedroom for bachelors, & it would be a very nice place for the Bethunes, Foulis', Peter Cleghorn or any other bachelor visitors.

Aunt Hill's room would be an excellent one for a married couple, because, as visitors never have much luggage, a separate dressing or baggage room for the lady would not be necessary. . . .

The enclosed plans will enable you to comprehend exactly what I want, *but if the noise of masons & carpenters* should be inconvenient to you, I beg you to let the plans alone.

In all probability the St. Andrews plumbers were able to improve upon these very detailed instructions, which included the insertion of a removable cork in each bathing tub ; in any case, at the conclusion of the work, S. E. Low proudly refers to "a bath with a shower, opposite the family bedroom, which can be hot or cold at pleasure."

When one reflects how many large country houses in England, as well as Scotland, possessed no bathroom as late as the eighties, this must have been regarded as a feat of wonderful modernity.

Before my grandfather, many years later, eventually finished alterations and additions to the house, Clatto was supplied with eight of the apartments so earnestly desired by Augusta, but when, on her death in 1892, my father came into the place, the "bath with a shower, which could be hot or cold at pleasure," of large dimensions and uncomfortable angles, remained without a rival !

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In the following winter William Low was engaged in a small campaign against the Rajah of Vizianagram, at the conclusion of which he had such a severe attack of fever that he was advised by the doctors to take a leave of eighteen months to the Cape, and in May, 1836, John wrote to his mother :

... William seems to have made up his mind now merely to return to Madras to take up the rank & pension of Lt. Col., & then finally to return to Fife. It is to be regretted, poor fellow, that he should be deprived of the means of saving any money during the next two years. I wish Sir William Fettes would give him a *little* slice of his enormous fortune, but I expect there is scarcely a chance of it.

Before this mail left India, Sir William and his gentle frail wife had both passed away in their Edinburgh house—13 Charlotte Square. The next letter from Clatto brought the news.

June 11th, 1836.
MY DEAREST JOHN,

We have lost my dear sister, Lady Fettes ; she died on the 7th May after a painful illness, greatly increased by a fall she got in stepping out of bed, & which she bore with her usual resignation.

We mourn our own privation—I feel assured she is enjoying perfect happiness. Sir William felt her death acutely & drooped daily & died at the end of the same month. He has left his great fortune to endow a hospital for the education of poor citizens, & to be called the Fettes Institution.

He left nothing to any of his family, but legacies, none exceeding one thousand [pounds], to some others who were neither relations of his nor my sister's.

By my dear sister's Will I get about seventeen hundred and fifty pounds in British Linen stock, & I have given orders to keep it there. She left me likewise a diamond

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ornament for the head, I believe it cost two hundred pounds, & a fine miniature of William Fettes which I value highly. A great while ago she wrote me that she meant to leave me that ornament & that if I had occasion to sell it, to do so, but if I kept it she wished me to leave it to Augusta.¹ . . .

I am always thankful & always will be, that notwithstanding the coolness between your father & Sir William, he seemed to delight in the company of the rest of the family, & it is probably that if it had pleased God to spare him longer he would have been a changed man.

Darling Charlotte is at present the centre of attraction to a numerous train, which does not spoil her for she walks off with her maid whenever she is bid, telling them she will be back bye & bye.

We have the Bethunes with us, & I really think the General makes as much of her as he does of his own. He is an affectionate father & husband, & one of the most reasonable well-informed men I ever met with.

Charlotte gets a little sugar & water with a bit of something good when she comes down after dinner; on Sunday, of her own accord she drinks all our friends in India; of course she was taught it at first.

On Sunday the sugar & water is coloured with a little Port, she often tells me through the week it would be much the better of a little Port, but I think it is better not.

A few days later S. E. Low wrote a long script to her remaining sister, which somehow found its way back to Clatto after the latter's death. It is the only one of the collection written to a contemporary.

MY EVER DEAR CHARLOTTE,

. . . It is a remarkable circumstance that a daughter of Mr. Low's & a daughter of Major Malcolm's should have been the only connections with Sir William when on his

¹ The "Sultana" was sold. On hearing of his "dear and kind Aunt Fettes'" death, John wrote from Lucknow— "Augusta begs that you will not for a moment think of keeping the diamond ornament on her account."

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deathbed ; to Mr. Low he had behaved unfeelingly, the Major had actually refused *him* admittance into his house, in which I think he was wrong.

I hope his virtues are rewarded & his errors pardoned through the mediation of our Saviour, & so may it be with us all.

Jessy Cleghorn was here some days ago with her nieces, they are genteel in their manners, seem well advanced for their age & their persons well cared for. Jessy has great credit in them.

Our friend Bob Kelso is dead, he was a fine young man. I remember Billy Kelso said to me at Doonside, that he heard that his brother Bob was a *fine gentleman*. I fired up in his defence, altho' I did not know he was a bit of an admirer of my own. William Low met with him in the Isle of France, & Bob, after looking at him attentively said—was he a relation of Mrs. Low in Fife?—& remarked that he was very like me, & added that if he had been in a situation to marry he would have asked me.

I imagine everybody has in their youth admirers they know nothing about, that is as admirers, & *vice versa*, they think others admirers who are not.

Here is little Charlotte come to say that she is going to her *promenade*. . . .

Gen. Foulis intends to go to London next month. A visit to London is easily accomplished by steam from Dundee, so I suppose the whole will be done in a week or ten days.

My letters are sadly interlined & not a little disjointed, & are by no means such as would be approved of by the Somervilles ; they liked kind of *Essays* on various subjects, but I think (& am glad Mrs. Hannah More thinks) I can get all manner of essays in books, & prefer giving & getting intelligence, however disjointed, of friends & family occurrences.

24th. This is the day of the fair at Ceres [a village a few miles distant], & numbers are walking steadily to it who will be *reeling* home at night.

I sent our pittance of wool to be sold, charging the man to drink nothing but a bottle of porter, whether he will obey or not is a different matter, for he is sometimes led to take too much ; he will only charge me for said

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porter, but I would willingly give much more to keep him sober.

Monday, 4th July. Georgina was at Naughton & went with Maria to Mountquhanie & St. Fort, the latter is quite magnificent. Mr. Stewart¹ went to London lately.

I find there are some things of our dear sister's to be divided between the Malcolms & me.

I insist that you shall make choice of anything that you wish to have that comes to me, as I shall have more pleasure in your having it than in having it myself. I have got much already.

Adieu, my ever dear Charlotte.

Lady Fettes' will is a very human document. The home of the old childless couple was never without one or other of her connections, and Georgina's place had been filled by younger nieces. Maria Fettes had not much to leave, her own little fortune amounting to between three and four thousand pounds; the year before her death she directed her trustees (General Bethune and General Foulis) to pay over "the half of my property to my sister, Mrs. Low, the other half to be divided among the three daughters of my brother, Major John Malcolm."

The list of jewellery specified in her personal effects seems singularly modest for the wife of so rich a man, but apparently the valuation for probate was kind.

The *pièce de résistance*—"My diamond Sultana," which was left to her sister, was valued at only £50.

To each member of the family circle one or two ornaments, many of which enshrined family locks, were assigned. In those days articles of

¹ Henry Stewart of St. Fort, 1796-1871.



ROBERT DEAS

LADY FETTES

SIR W. FETTES

ELEANOR MALCOLM

MRS. ADAM BRUCE

ARCHIBALD FOULIS

SILHOUETTE OF SIR WILLIAM AND LADY FETTES, BY EDOUART, 1832

In the possession of Mrs. Davidson

The castle in the distance is probably an imaginary conception of the future College

LUCKNOW

attire were possessions and not ephemeral coverings, and she further bequeathed :

To Mrs. Deas my Velvet Gown.
Sattin Gown, Eleanor Malcolm.
Major Low's scarf, Maria Malcolm.
Best Shawl, Georgina Low.
All my finest Nightcaps, my sister, Mrs. Low.
My finest lace Tippet with piece to match, Mrs. Major Malcolm.

Her greatest treasure,

William's miniature¹ to my sister, Mrs. Low. She & Mr. Low were most kind to him when a child.

The following legacies seem pathetically small. No doubt the recipients by virtue of Scotch thrift, exercised through years of faithful service, had acquired an independence :

I request you to pay John Innes Senr. the sum of Ten guineas, as mark of my gratitude for his great feeling & attention to me at the time of my beloved William's death, & for his uniform good conduct at all times.

Secondly the sum of Ten guineas to my Housekeeper, Mrs. Hopkirk, as a mark of my gratitude for kind attention to me during long bad health.

All my cloathes, except what I have mentioned, to Mrs. Hopkirk. If I was rich I would leave her more money than I have done.

The question of the Fettes fortune was settled at last ; the Gordon brothers, once supposed to have been his heirs, had long since faded out of the picture. Sir William had, in fact, executed a trust six years before his death, devoting the residue of his estate (after the payment of a few

¹ In S. E. Low's will, this miniature was bequeathed to Maria Bethune.

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inconsiderable legacies) to the founding of the college which bears his name. According to modern standards, it was not so very enormous. The Trust Funds, at his death, amounted to £160,000, and the Trustees very wisely allowed the interest to accumulate.

The building, at Comely Bank, on the outskirts of Edinburgh, was commenced in 1864, but the College was not opened until October, 1870—forty-three years after his death. It is, as is well known, run on the same lines as English public schools, but it was decided by the Trustees that a certain number of boys, whose circumstances should make them eligible, were to receive board and education free.

The inscription placed by the Trustees on the Fettes tomb in Canongate churchyard is as follows :

Sacred to the Memory of
SIR WILLIAM FETTES
Of Comely Bank, Baronet,
Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh,
in 1801 & 1802,

And a second time in 1805 & 1806.

B. 25th June 1750, D. 27th May 1836.
Also of MARIA MALCOLM his wife

Who died 7th May 1836
and

WILLIAM FETTES, Advocate, their only son,
Who died at Berlin, 13th June 1815,
Aged 27 years.

Over the grave of its Founder,
The Trustees of the Fettes Endowment
Have erected this Monument

In grateful recognition of the enlightened benevolence
Which devoted the acquisition of an honorable life,
To the useful purpose of providing
For the children of his less fortunate fellow countrymen,
The blessings of a sound & liberal education.

CHAPTER IX

Lucknow, 1837; the King's Death and the Begum's Insurrection

THREE was much correspondence between Lucknow and Calcutta in 1836. The King of Oudh's reckless extravagance had depleted the treasury. John Low's old friend, Sir Charles Metcalfe,¹ took over the Governor-Generalship on the retirement of Bentinck, and the following letter, sent in the preceding winter, gives an idea of the condition of the country at the time.

From Mr. Secretary Macnaghten, to Lt.-Col. Low, Resident at Lucknow.

SIR,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 5th inst.

The Governor-General in Council entirely & highly approves your proceedings as therein reported. He further authorizes & directs me to remonstrate strongly & incessantly with the King & his Ministers privately, & if necessary publicly, fully, plainly & without reserve, on his wasteful extravagance, & on the state of arrears & distress in which the troops & other public establishments, as well as members of his own family are consequently kept, to the disgrace of his Government & personal character, &

¹ Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, third Baronet (1785-1846). After holding various important Indian appointments, was called on to take over the Governor-Generalship provisionally in 1835. Resigned the Co.'s Service in 1838, Governor of Jamaica 1838-1842, Governor-General of Canada 1842-5. Created Baron Metcalfe.

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eventually, as is most probable, to his own ruin, for it is impossible that such a state of affairs can last without leading to an explosion, which will afford such manifestations of misrule as are very likely, with reference to the declared intentions of the Court of Directors, to cause his deposition.

FORT WILLIAM, 23rd Nov., 1835.

The allusion in this very wordy dispatch—typical of Macnaghten—was pointed, for the King was on notoriously bad terms with his relations. He possessed no brothers, but had several uncles, whom he treated with extreme brutality.

The greatest focus point of danger was, however, to be found in the personality of the Padshaw Begum,¹ widow of Ghazi-ud-din Hyder, one of those tigress-women, more virile than their husbands, who, when finding themselves in a position to gratify their lust for power, have played a considerable part in oriental history. The kindly old Nawab, who welcomed Lord Moira in 1814, had quailed before her, when in fits of ungovernable rage, she assaulted his person, clutching the royal beard, and lacerating the royal visage!

The Begum had borne no son, but had constituted herself the “adoptive mother” of Nasir-ud-din, having poisoned, according to rumour, his own mother at his birth, in order to assume complete control of the heir. At this time, however, she had attached herself as fiercely to Moona Jan, which caused a complete breach between the King and herself.

Some years earlier,² when he had demanded

¹ “Padshah Begum”—principal wife. During this reign the term was only used to designate the Queen Dowager.

² Knighton, page 131. The actual date of this occurrence is not given.

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possession of the boy, she absolutely refused to give him up, flouting also a second demand from Nasir-ud-din that she should quit the Farhat Baksh. One of the strangest features of this strange Court was the institution of female sepoys to guard the entrances to the harem. Their uniform was precisely similar to that of ordinary sepoys of the period ; they wore jackets and white duck trousers, and their accoutrements consisted of muskets and bayonets, cross-belts and cartridge-boxes.

At this juncture, the King ordered his women soldiers to attack the Begum's attendants, and wild firing ensued, in which fifteen or sixteen of them were killed.

The Resident intervened, and arbitrated between the parties. Nasir-ud-din promised to leave Moona Jan unmolested under the Begum's protection, and she, on her part, consented to remove to another of the royal palaces.

The officials, carrying on the administrative work of the British Raj in days when railroads and telegraphs were unknown, could only keep in touch with affairs in other parts of India by means of friendly letters, often enclosing copies of dispatches which had been sent to and from the Central Government at Calcutta.

In a docket of letters preserved by my grandfather, is a reply from Sir Frederick Adam,¹ Governor of Madras, to such a letter of his written at this time ; it affords a glimpse of a mutual family friend in Fife.

¹ Sir Frederick Adam, fourth son of the Hon. William Adam, of Blair Adam (the Lord Chief Commissioner)—1781-1853. Commanded a brigade at Waterloo. Governor of Madras 1832-7.

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OOTACAMUND, 15th July, 1836.

MY DEAR COLONEL,

I am very much obliged to you for communicating the very interesting despatch to which your letter gave cover. I think the most jealous will have no reason to say the conduct of the Paramount Power has not been forbearing in the highest degree towards the infatuated King of Oudh. . . .

I give you very cordially my congratulations on your very admirable & very wise & manly straight-forwardness, it is true policy & wisdom, but I fear your endeavours to save this ruler will be without effect.

The Supreme Government's answer to your despatch is as it should be.

I am much pleased that you have had such recent excellent accounts of our good old friend, Mr. Cleghorn. He is a very remarkable man, & his letters are as lively as his conversation. In one of his late ones he adverted to the annual meeting at his house of what he calls the "Octogenarian Club," consisting of himself, Gen. Durham of Largo & my father, each of them upwards of eighty.

Gen. Durham is the *Boots!* at these meetings & the seniors exact all the duties of the office from their junior. I have no doubt that the flow of wit was copious & of the best quality. I am not sorry to see the period of my return to Europe so near, & I hope ere *many* years (few, I trust) are over, to renew my acquaintance with you in the Kingdom of Fife. . . .

S. E. Low, meanwhile, was sitting for her portrait at Clatto :

Aug. 29th, 1836.

MY DEAREST JOHN,

This will be delivered to you by Capt. Mill [a relation of her son-in-law's on leave from India] who has been at the enormous expense of sending an eminent artist from London to draw little darling's & my pictures.

The idea was worthy of the mingled kindness & magnificence of a friend. My picture is thought extremely like, & you will see from it that I am quite an old woman, & no shame for me at near seventy-six. Little darling's

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picture as far as it is come, promises well. May all happiness attend you, Augusta, & the dear little Malcolm, not forgetting Henry, who does not write as often as I could wish. . . .

She did not write again for some months :

Dec. 15th, 1836. . . . I shall follow your directions about the house, which I mean to set about in spring if it please God to spare me.

We have had a visit from the Mills lately, accompanied by the Comte de Moligné ; Mr. Mill remained a few days, left Charlotte & the Count ten days, returned for them & stayed some days.

The Count came to Edinburgh with Charles the 10th¹ ; his brother, the Abbé, is one of the Duc de Bordeaux's tutors. The Duchesse D'Angoulême was very particular in inquiry about people with whom the Count associates, & her Dame d'honneur was a visitor of Charlotte's.

What keeps the Count in Edin^r. I know not. His father, the Marquis, still resides in France with his wife & two daughters. Little darling was quite enchanted with the Count, & he seemed delighted with her.

Mrs. Macdonald has had a serious illness ; I am afraid she will never again be as strong as she has been. They have a very nice chaise that hold two & is drawn by one horse, & is driven by their tenant of the glebe. So they keep neither horse nor cow, are supplied with whatever they need by the same tenant, & when they leave home cast all care behind them.

Hugh Playfair has built an addition to his house, St. Leonard's, & has got a theatre in the upper storey ; he occupies himself much in the garden & in teaching his daughters music. Col. Playfair's family excel in theatrical exhibitions.

Little darling can repeat the first chapter of Genesis, but has gone no farther in book learning than the alphabet ; if it please God to spare me I intend she should proceed at

¹ Hollywood was twice placed at the disposal of Charles X —when he came to England in 1795, as Comte d'Artois, and again in 1830 after his abdication, when he was accompanied by his entire family.

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four years old. When she hears a word that is new to her, she immediately asks *the French of it*, in English she is a bit of a cockney, for she frequently uses W. for V. ; she told Georgina that a *variety* of people thought she was clever. Georgina told her not to believe all she was told on that subject.

She is almost always with us, & quite a companion.

The next two letters were mainly concerned with planting, building and a new water supply ; for the amount of work undertaken, the cost appears to have been enviably small. In a controversy with a neighbour, the old lady held her own with a good deal of spirit :

Jan. 22nd, 1837.

. . . I shall attend to your directions about planting immediately. Your father was as much set upon water closets as you seem to be, but he gave it up. I must now speak of our want of water supply. The well at the kitchen door uniformly runs dry at harvest, & we are obliged to get water from the washing house. . . .

A plumber was looking at a spring in the sheep park, & pretends that the water might be brought to the house ; it is said that it never runs dry, of that I know nothing, but the difference between a few sheep (if they drink) & the consumption that would take place here is very different. . . .

April 22nd. . . . There was an advertisement in the papers, before the last road meeting in St. Andrews, purporting that a proposal was to be made for connecting the road from Strathkinness by Easter Clatto towards Blebo Craigs into a Statute Labour road.

I found it was put in by Mr. Whyte Melville, & I immediately wrote him that the road between Easter Clatto & Wester Clatto [farms] was private property belonging to Clatto. I had an answer from Mr. Whyte Melville that he would not make the proposal at next meeting, but was still of opinion that they had a right to it.

I have drawn up an address to the road meeting stating that we have been in possession of that road for above

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fifty years, & that by the Road Act no person can make either a Public or Statute Labour road nearer to a gentleman's mansion than three hundred yards ; the road in question is not quite a hundred yards from our outer stair.

I thought it right to let you know what had been done. I mentioned in my address (which I hope there will be no occasion to present) that your father had made the road & that it was kept up by me, & that consequently none had a right to it but there allowed by me.

The old house is down, & the wings at the back blue-slated. At present we have masons, wrights, slaters, & to-morrow we shall have the addition of plasterers. I am afraid the expense of all the improvements will be more than you are aware of, I have already paid more than ninety pounds, & I think that before the back-stairs etc. are finished it will amount to two hundred.

I am sick tired of work people, at the same time happy that dear Augusta & you will be spared the nuisance.

The month following, the little son in India was packed off to join his sister ; the parents were taking no more risks.

Unable themselves to leave Lucknow, the baby was " provided with good attendants " as far as Calcutta, where a " woman servant " was engaged to take him to Clatto.

She & the child are to be while in London, under the charge of the lady who has now the charge of my sister-in-law, Selina Shakespear, & her cousins, the daughters of Mr. Henry Shakespear, the Member of Council in Calcutta. The lady's name is M^{me} Zialtkze, & her house is No. 29 Upper Bedford Place. Mr. Mill or Robert Foulis, or Peter Cleghorn will I hope do as dear William did in respect of darling Charlotte.

In the end, however, little Malcolm did not invade the old lady's seminary ; Henry, in charge of the embarkation arrangements, engaged the ship's doctor, an Angus man, to escort nurse and baby either to Leith or Dundee.

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In his next letter, John was able to send a good report to his mother of his youngest brother :

July 4th, 1837.

. . . I heard from Henry yesterday, he has made his first remittance of £500 for the payment of his debts ; he tells me also that he has insured his life for £3,000, . . . & in the event of his death there would be a dividend, at least, to all his creditors.

Three days later—a little before midnight on July 7th—a messenger was dispatched in all haste to the Residency to say that the King was dying.

Foul play was suspected. Nasir-ud-din, in hourly fear of death, had of late carried round his neck, night and day, the key of a private well, from which only his two sisters were allowed to draw his drinking water.

John Low, accompanied by the Residency Surgeon, a Scotchman, named Stephenson, and his first Assistant, Captain Paton, at once started for the palace. They found Nasir-ud-din's body laid out on a bed. The doctor opened a vein ; blood flowed freely, and it was evident that death had only just occurred. It was rumoured later that one of his sisters had been bribed to put poison into his last drink of sherbet, but he had been long in bad health, and from his expression, death appeared to have been painless.

The situation was critical. The heir-apparent, the late King's uncle, Nasir-ud-daulah, was not *persona grata* to a large faction at the Court and in the city. He was known to be a prudent, somewhat parsimonious old man, and fears were entertained that on accession he would insist on the disgorgement of much ill-gotten wealth.

DEATH OF THE KING

On being summoned to the palace, the Resident at once wrote to request the Brigadier commanding in Oudh (the cantonments were some four miles distant from the city) to have a thousand men in readiness to march at a moment's notice, and he further required that five companies should be sent at once in advance, but there was unfortunately some delay in the reception of the latter message.

The history of the next twelve hours has been fully and concisely told in a memorandum which John Shakespear drew up for his chief, and which the latter endorsed and forwarded with his second report to Government. At the moment the total number of British troops available amounted to two and a half companies, one of which constituted the Residency Escort. These men were left at the palace under the command of Captain Paton, with instructions to distribute them at the inner doors of the building and at the Treasury, and jewels and other valuables were hastily sealed up, while the Resident returned home to draw up an Agreement¹ in Persian for the King-elect to sign.

This was conveyed to the latter's house, about a mile away, by John Shakespear. Nasir-ud-daulah read it through and willingly affixed his seal, and on receiving back the document, my grandfather returned to the Farhat Baksh to await his arrival, having dispatched both Captain Paton and Lieutenant Shakespear to conduct him to the palace.

All these proceedings had taken time, and it was three o'clock in the morning of the 8th

¹ This document was a promise to be guided by the Government after accession.

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before the old man arrived, accompanied by his sons and other relatives and attendants.

He was in very feeble health, and was conducted to an inner room to repose on a couch for an hour or two before undergoing the fatigue of the coronation ceremonies.

The three British officers meanwhile retired to an outer verandah overlooking the Gumti, to confer about the arrangements for his installation on the "Gaddi," when news was brought that the Padshaw Begum was making for the palace, surrounded by her bodyguard, and followed by a large armed rabble. The possibility of this occurrence had been foreseen, and the Resident, on the King's death, had dispatched a native official, accompanied by two troopers, to enjoin the lady strictly not to leave her palace, which was four miles distant. Assurances had been given to him by the Minister, Roshan-ud-daulah, that the roads and inlets leading to the Farhat Baksh were strongly guarded by bodies of troops¹ in the pay of the late King. These promises were not kept—all was treachery and confusion.

The Begum, however, knew exactly what she wanted. Accompanied by her charge, the boy Moona Jan, her procession of disorderly followers gathering fresh recruits all along the route, she swept onwards, and on passing the house of the Kotwal (Head of the City Police), summoned him to attend the enthronement of his new sovereign. The latter, however, after consenting, thought it more prudent to retire and await the final outcome.

¹ A considerable number of troops were in the direct service of the Kings of Oudh.

THE BEGUM'S INSURRECTION

On hearing the noise of a large approaching body of men, Captain Paton rushed to the north-west gate, accompanied by a few sepoys, just as the Begum was thundering for admission. He attempted to parley, but—

... Before he could get a reply, the insurgents brought up an elephant to force in the gate with his head. The first failed in the attempt & drew back with a frightful roar.

A second, urged on by a furious driver, broke in the gate; one half fell with a crash to the ground, & the elephant plunged in after it. . . .

. The furious & confused mass rushed through the half-opened gate, & beat Captain Paton to the ground with their bludgeons, the hilts of their swords & their muskets.¹

To the last minute the injured man tried to reason with his assailants, but by the time one of his faithful sepoys had succeeded in pushing his way through the crowd to meet the five companies of the 35th Regiment under Colonel Monteith, which had just arrived, he was insensible from his wounds.

Thirty sepoys were detailed for his rescue, and they were just in time. The mob, delayed for a moment by an inner gate of slender iron-work, held to by the Resident, with whom were John Shakespear and the Meer Moonshee, a faithful native official, surged into the palace, deaf to reasoning and brandishing their weapons. The little party was thus left isolated, guarded by a detachment of the insurgents, and *completely cut off from the scene of action*. John Low therefore demanded to be conducted to the Begum. By this

¹ *Through the Kingdom of Oudh*, by Colonel (afterwards Sir William) Sleeman. Sleeman knew all the participants in the night's affair.

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time, not only the palace, but the courtyard and the great hall of state (it consisted of four vast halls, in one of which the throne was erected) were filled by an armed rabble, by some computed at 2,000 men.

The child had already been placed on the throne, at the foot of which the Begum had installed herself in a covered palanquin.

A scene more wild, more utterly *bizarre* than the Farhat Baksh palace presented from midnight to morning, can hardly be imagined.

The dead King lay in one chamber, the respectable but decrepit Nasir-ud-daulah, sat cowering in fear of his life in another, while a furious mob of matchlock men & dancing girls filled the Burradurree, or great hall of state with mad acclamations in honour of Moona Jan & the Padshaw Begum.¹

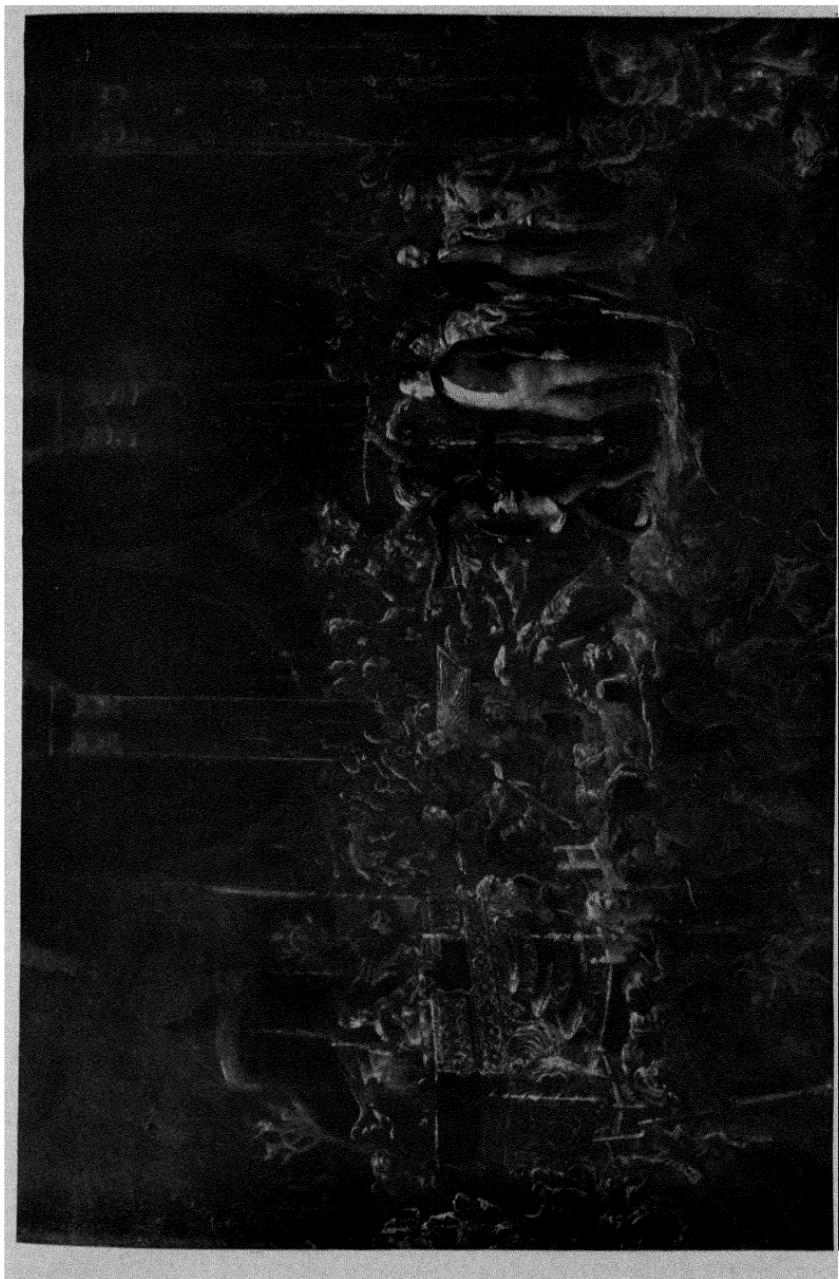
John Low's encounter on this occasion with that masterful lady is described in greater detail by Sleeman than in the official report. There was as yet no sign of the expected force from cantonments, only the five companies under Colonel Monteith were drawn up in the garden awaiting orders.

As the Resident entered, accompanied by John Shakespear—

... The band struck up "God save the King," answered by a salute of blunderbusses within, & a double royal salute from the guns in the northern courtyard through which the Begum had passed. Other guns, which had been collected in the confusion to salute somebody (though those who commanded & served them knew not whom) continued the salute through the streets without.

... At the same time the crowd, within & without, shouted their congratulations at the tops of their voices, & every man who had a sword, musket or matchlock, flourished it in the air amidst a thousand torches. . . .

¹ *The Garden of India*, by H. C. Irwin.



THE BEGUM'S ATTEMPT TO USURP THE THRONE OF OUDH FOR MOONA JAN
7TH JULY, 1837

From the sepia drawing by A. Dufay de Casanova, presented by the Court of Directors to John Low

THE BEGUM'S INSURRECTION

In the midst of all this, the Resident & his Assistants ¹ remained cool under all kinds of foul abuse & threats from a multitude resolved to force them to commit some act or make use of some expression that might seem to justify their murder. They fired muskets close to their ears, pointed others loaded & cocked, close to their breasts & faces, but all in vain.

The Resident in the midst of all this confusion, pointed out to the Begum the impossibility of her ultimately succeeding in her attempt,—& that if he & his Assistants were killed, his Government would soon send others to carry out their orders.

“ I am,” she said, “ in my right place, & so is the young King, my grandson, & so are you. Why do you talk to me or anybody else of leaving the throne & the Burradurree ? ”

But some of her furious followers, afraid that she might yield, seized him by the neck-cloth, & dragged him towards the throne, & commanded him to present his offerings & congratulations on the threat of instant death.

At this juncture, the Begum's Vakeel, seeing that he gave no sign of compliance, and realizing better than his imperious mistress the consequences that would inevitably follow their assassination, rushed forward, and shouting that it was by her order, safely conducted them both into the garden, where Colonel Monteith was stationed.

A very disgraceful incident occurred about this time ; a British officer commanding a brigade in the late King's service, presented his offerings to the throne, and then withdrew to await the turn of events.

The position was critical ; the sepoys distributed as sentries by Captain Paton, had stuck manfully to their posts since midnight, but looting had already commenced in the outlying quarters of the palace, and reports were brought in from the

¹ Shakespear was the only one of the Assistants present, at this scene.

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city that five or six houses had already been pillaged and many people ill-treated.

The force under Brigadier Johnstone had however now arrived, and were drawn up in front of the Burraderee.

The Resident sent a messenger to the Begum offering a free pardon ¹ to all concerned if she would surrender, and further, guaranteed, in that case, that the payment of a large pension, at one time promised to her by the late King, should be confirmed.

She, however, encouraged by reports of the growing disorder in the city, continued to send evasive answers, and urged him to ascend once more to the Burraderee for a further conference. This was refused, and to her last emissary he declared, watch in hand, that unless she made up her mind, not as to the terms offered, but actually to reach the spot where he was standing within one quarter of an hour, the guns would open fire on the throne room.

The fifteen minutes expired, and he turned to the Brigadier to say that the time for action had arrived. It was just an hour and twenty minutes since the troops had taken up their position in the garden.

After six or seven rounds of grape, a party of the 35th advanced to the assault, rushing with loaded muskets and fixed bayonets by a narrow passage and steep staircase to the interior of the Burraderee, from whence a running fire was kept up.

¹ The most cogent reason for avoiding recourse to arms, if it had been possible, was that the poor old Nasir-ud-daulah was in the hands of the insurgents, and that an attack might have resulted in his murder.

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The insurgents then escaped from the farther side of the building, leaving between thirty and forty killed and wounded behind them, and the halls and palace were shortly in the possession of the attacking party.

The child was discovered in a small recess under the throne, and the Begum in an adjoining room, to which she had been carried in her palanquin when the guns opened fire.

The night must have seemed a long one to Augusta Low at the Residency, separated from both husband and brother, and ignorant of what was actually taking place. Even the Residency doctor was in the thick of the fray, collecting ladders for a second assault on the south side of the Burradurree.

It was nine o'clock in the morning, and the crucial issue of the night's work was yet to come. John Low had much ado in soothing the poor old king-to-be, who was found to be in a pitiable condition. He and his little party had been subjected to insults and intimidation for many hours although they had sustained no actual injury.

The halls were cleared of dead and wounded, and preparations set on foot for an immediate coronation—Nasir-ud-daulah assuming the new name of Muhammed Ali Shah.¹

When all was ready, the Resident conducted him from the palace to the Burradurree, accompanied by the Brigadier & all the principal officers of the British force, & the Court—seated him on the throne, placed the crown on his head, under a royal salute, repeated from every

¹ Kay and Malleson sum up the night's work thus: "The cool courage of Low and his Assistants saved the city from a deluge of blood."

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battery in the city, & proclaimed him King of Oudh in presence of all the aristocracy & principal persons of Lucknow, who had flocked to the palace on hearing that the danger had passed away.

The Begum and Moona Jan, meanwhile, were conducted to apartments in the Residency, accompanied by two women attendants, where they were kept under strong guard.

The new King held his brother's widow in horror, and told John Low that she was "the most wicked and unscrupulous woman he had ever known," and that no peace could be expected in Lucknow while she remained.

There was, moreover, a recrudescence of trouble in the city, and rumours were current that an attack was to be made on the Residency, in order to attempt to effect a rescue.

He therefore determined to send her and the boy out of Oudh, and at midnight on the 11th, they were placed in palanquins, and sent off, attended by John Shakespear, with an escort of a regiment of infantry and a detachment of artillery. Relays of palanquin and torch-bearers were stationed at different points of the route, and they marched without a halt through one of the hottest days of the year, reaching Cawnpore at half-past nine on the night of the 12th.

From thence they were sent to the Fort of Chunar, where they were kept as state prisoners, being permitted all the freedom compatible with their safe custody. Moona Jan,¹ from all accounts,

¹ Colonel Sleeman, who saw Moona Jan at Chunar in 1838, says of him: "A more unpromising boy I have never seen." He died before the Begum (who remained devoted to him to the last), leaving three sons by two slave girls.

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was a vicious lad, who had been encouraged in habits of atrocious cruelty by the Begum.

For some time after this event, John Low had no leisure for home letters. In his last report he warmly commends—

the excellent conduct of the troops, & the cordial support that I personally received from Brigadier Johnstone & other military officers.

He also brings to the notice of the Government—

the prominent zeal & highly useful exertions of my Assistants, Capt. Paton & Lt. Shakespear. . . . I shall never cease to remember with pride & pleasure, not only the activity & anxiety which they both evinced to aid me in every possible way, but their coolness under frequent personal danger.

On September 26th there is a memo. in his letter-book to the effect that copies of Government dispatches and of a private letter from the new Governor-General, Lord Auckland,¹ had been sent "to complete Archy Foulis' packet," evidently for transmission to his brother-in-law. To his mother he gave no account of the affair. Sir Charles Metcalfe, who had resumed his former appointment as Governor of the North-West Provinces on the arrival of Auckland, also received copies of the dispatches. They were formally acknowledged in a letter written by his Secretary, followed a day later by a few lines from himself.

¹ George Eden, second Baron Auckland (1784-1849), Governor-General 1835-41. The letter in question expresses—" My own personal gratification at the good service which you have rendered us, & the firmness & judgment which you have displayed under the circumstances of extreme difficulty & unforeseen emergency which occurred at Lucknow."

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AGRA, 23rd July, 1837.
MY DEAR LOW,

I do not wonder at any delay in ordinary matters during the turmoil that you have been in, but I cannot refrain from congratulating you on your escape from the hands of ruffians, & in the successful termination of the most extraordinary disturbances that ever occurred. What could the old witch have expected from such conduct. . . .

Yours very sincerely,
C. T. METCALFE.

My grandfather's correspondence was increased at this time by letters received from native friends, of which the following (literally translated from the Persian) are specimens :

To most kind, of high qualities, & great benefactor of sincere friends,

After the compliments & submission & eagerly looking forward to seeing you, which will give me a great pleasure, may it be known to your affectionate heart that I have come to know, during these days, that the King, the shelter of the world, has departed from the capital of Lucknow to his exalted abode in the Heavens, which has caused, no doubt, an immense grief in the minds of every high & low individual.

I have also heard that during a skirmish with some people, you have received a wound. This has greatly pained me (your sincere friend) & caused an anxiety.

I therefore trouble you to kindly let me know fully of your condition so that it may allay the anxiety of your friend. I hope you will always consider me a loyal and true well-wisher of the Government & a sincere friend of yourself, & will always oblige by kindly writing to me.

Wishing you every prosperity & success in your career,
THAKUR BISHAM SINGH.

Aug., 1837.
To the Exalted & high benefactor of obedient servants.
SIR,

During these days I have learnt from the newspapers the death of His Majesty the King of Audh, & that a

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trouble having ensued with the Queen, you have received a wound. This has greatly caused an anxiety in the mind of your well wisher (myself), & I am praying night & day that Almighty God may keep you under his protection & elevate you to high position.

I am, through your kindness, in the service of Thakur Bisham Singh, Rais of —, & my brother, Shaikh Imdad Ali is a Record Keeper in Wasowah district. I hope you will always show kindness to this old servant of yours & am confident of your good nature that whenever you will find a suitable post for me you will kindly help me to it.

As I deemed it proper, I wrote it.

Best wishes for your ever-increasing prosperity,

Your obedient servant,

SHAIKH RIAYAT ALI.

6th August, 1837.

The wound, about which such fervent inquiries were made, is mentioned in no other document or letter !

The death of Nasir-ud-din Hyder was celebrated by John Shakespear for the delectation of the family circle in verses, which, although of small literary merit, present an accurate picture of the opening scene in the drama of the night, and a truer estimate of the grief felt at the passing of the King—" the Shelter of the World," by such of his faithful servants as had been actually in contact with him.

'Tis midnight, and buried in slumber profound
Lies Oude's fairest city—scarce a sound
Invades the dark gloom, all is peaceful and still
Save where the voice of some dancing girl shrill
Is borne on the breeze, it reaches the ear
From far distant mansion of wealthy Ameer,
Proclaims that its inmates their revels prolong
And wile away ennui with dance and with song,
Or perchance where from mosque or from minaret tall
In sonorous cadence floats the muezzin's call

Inviting to prayer each mussulman true
With Allah Hu Akber ! Allah Hu Akber ! Hu !

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Did fancy beguile me, or heard I a strain
That came piercing and sad? Oh no! once again
It rings wildly and shrill! now shriek upon shriek
And wail after wail too clearly bespeak,
As they burst from within the zenana's high wall
That death has his victim! Whose the dread call?
'Tis thine Nusseeroodeen, this morn thou wert King
Of Oude's spacious realm; to-night females sing
Thy funeral dirge.

Despised by all, regretted by none,
To the dark silent tomb in youth thou art gone,
How unprincely thy wont to pass the night long
With low boon companions in dance and in song,
Whilst the roof of thy palace re-echoed the shout
Of their bacchanal orgies and maddening rout.
To bandy the jest, the wine cup to drain,
Forbidden to Moslem. Ah, ne'er didst thou deign,
As seated at banquet, the base crew among,
To list to the tale of oppression and wrong
By thy subjects endured.

The news reached Clatto in the following winter, but the only reference to it in family correspondence occurs in a P.S. added by S. E. Low to a letter describing the joy of little Charlotte at her brother's arrival.

Saturday, December 2nd. My dearest John, I wrote the above before I heard of the terrible risk you had run at Lucknow, thank God, Henry says you were safe.

What dreadful feelings poor Augusta must have had during the time you were absent.

The Foulis' are here at present. Foulis desires me to say he is most highly gratified with all he hears of your conduct, both from public information & from private accounts.

John Low was made a C.B. at this time, and the Court of Directors, in a letter to the Indian Government, were pleased to express entire approval of his conduct in quelling the Begum's attempt, adding—"We are also pleased with the

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arrangements made for the safe custody of that ambitious Princess." They also ordered a picture to be painted of the scene in the Burradurree by the Court Painter, Casanova, and presented to him in memory of the occasion.

The only mention of the affair in his letter-book occurs long after—in the memo. of a P.S. to a letter sent to his mother on October 15th, 1838, which gives the impression that his action had been subjected to arm-chair criticisms of the time-honoured kind.

To the following purpose—that the praise of the Court of Directors—is *too much* for the occasion, so pray connote the interest as only for the family.

Much obliged to Bethune & Foulis for publishing the former despatches, but there is no necessity for setting people right in their opinions now (as there may have been then), & it is better that nothing more should be said about my proceedings at L., unless in chat *among ourselves* by the fire-side when so inclined.

CHAPTER X

Lucknow, 1838. The Army of the Indus. Departure for the Cape, 1839

IN the autumn of 1837, Selina Shakespear, having arrived at the age of seventeen, migrated in her turn to India. For five years she had been the only member of her family left in England.

Her holidays had been mainly passed at Boxwell Court, Gloucestershire, and her *Reminiscences* contain happy memories of summers passed there with her uncle, Arthur Shakespear and his family. The journey down was formidable ; it took twelve hours from the "Stones" at Hammersmith by coach to Cheltenham, where she doubtless slept before the further stretch to Wotton-under-Edge.

She also recalls pleasant visits to Broxbourne Vicarage, where Francis Thackeray was curate-in-charge. He and his wife were delighted to exchange London for this quiet country parish which he loved, and where he had leisure to continue his literary work. On winter evenings Selina, with his own children and Augusta Dick, remembers forming one of an absorbed group, listening in the firelight while he told them wonderful fairy tales.

She was made much of on the voyage, and on reaching Calcutta early in January was received with acclamation by the family, and made her

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home with Marianne Irvine, now a matron of three years' standing and the mother of two babies, where she met, curiously enough for the first time (for their time in England had overlapped by some years), her civilian brother George. Of him she writes :

George had been so much in the jungles that he was shy, but so witty and amusing when alone with us.

In the family he was known as "the Bear," on account of his rotund form and rolling gait, and his eldest brother describes him as "full of fun and spirits." The three brothers, who were *all* prone to break into verse, set to work to celebrate the occasion, but George's effusion is easily the best.

John¹ at the time was at his post at Lucknow, where his duties included the command of the Escort, and Richmond had recently joined the Survey Branch of the Revenue Department at Gorakhpur. The "poem" evidently embodies some recent family jokes.

Unwonted mats the Major's² dwelling grace,
Unwonted smiles bedeck the Major's face,
The Major's wife full joyous moves about,
The house arranging, turning each thing out.
Onwards the tidings fly to gloomy Ghoruckpore,
Where witless youths the jungle's depths explore,
Stretch the long chain, or point theodolite
Going most wrong when thinking they're most right.
Richmond, the news received, ecstatic starts !
His nether garb in sunder parts,
Alas for poverty ! his only pair,
His last, his nearest, dearest, parted there.

¹ Known in his family as "the Patriach."

² Major Irvine.

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The Patriarch, in distant seat reclined,
 Feels the glad notice soothe his mind,
Sepoys, or sepoy's claims no more annoy,
 He waves his bony arm & shouts for joy !
 Lucknow's barbaric Queen, her terrors laid aside,
Smooths her dread front and shakes her kerchief wide !
 The brute creation e'en the influence share
And shuffles with his gambles rude, your *Polar Bear*.
 Hail ! all declare, to dust and glare and heat !
 Hail ! to the land where palkees madly meet.

Henry Shakespear, since 1835, had been Member of Council, and as his daughters had shared Selina's educational advantages in dancing, deportment and the use of the globes at the establishments of both Mrs. Ludlam and Mme. Zialtkze, she found herself very much at home in Calcutta.

When I arrived, Uncle Henry was in Council. He was then giving grand balls in honour of Sir Charles Metcalfe & the Higginsons, who were staying with him *en route* to England.

Uncle Henry was much beloved—of a retiring manner & a steadfast character, not tall & handsome like Uncle Arthur, but winning in manner.

Louisa, the eldest of Henry Shakespear's daughters, was the wife of Sir Charles Metcalfe's Secretary, Captain J. Macaulay Higginson, and the former, who was a bachelor, enjoyed some measure of home life in the company of this young couple, who were returning with him to England, and later accompanied him when he went to Jamaica as Governor, and again when he was sent as Governor-General to Canada.

Metcalfe, one of India's strongest and wisest administrators, had introduced several new measures during his period of office, notably that of liberating the Indian Press, which, although appreciated in that country, had brought about

strained relations with the Court of Directors and led to his resignation.

The second daughter¹ of Henry Shakespear was married, shortly before Selina's arrival, to Mr. Coutts Trotter, of the Bengal Civil Service, and a few days before the wedding the bride received a handsome bracelet from the Governor-General, who had left the capital, with a letter asking her to accept it as a mark of the regard which he and his sisters felt for her and her family.

Lord Auckland, like Metcalfe, was unmarried, but his sisters, notably the elder of the two, helped him in dispensing hospitality.

He was a shy, retiring man, personally well liked, but misgivings as to his powers of judgment were beginning to be felt in responsible quarters, although the fatal lack of resolution of character, which led to his disastrous policy in Afghanistan, was yet to be revealed. Towards the end of the preceding October, accompanied by his Secretaries and both his sisters, he started on a prolonged tour of the Upper Provinces, which included two long visits to Simla; for over two years he was absent from Calcutta, two fateful years, when, separated from his Council, he allowed himself to be swayed by the ambitious and over-sanguine minds of his immediate entourage.

During the tour, Emily Eden kept up a correspondence, in the form of a journal,² with a sister

¹ Within a year of her marriage, Harriet Coutts Trotter died in Calcutta—at the house of Marianne Irvine—after giving birth to a daughter.

² This journal was published in 1866, under the title of *Up the Country*, by the Hon. Emily Eden. Her two novels—*The Semi-Detached House* and *The Semi-Attached Couple*—have recently been re-published.

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in England, and many of the incidents noted by her lively and satirical pen (which, however, concealed a kindly heart) have a certain pathos.

At a ball given by her brother at Delhi, she remarks that the best-looking women present were the much-painted wives of the officers of a certain regiment, who went by the name of "the little corpses," adding in parenthesis—"and very hard it is, too, upon most corpses."

Years before, they had probably arrived from England fresh enough, before an unbroken stretch of years in a tropical climate had robbed their cheeks of their natural roses.

At one small station there were only three ladies, one of whom was never visible on account of depression of spirits, the second had weak sight, and wore "a shade about the size of a common verandah," while the third, who had been obliged to have her head shaved during a bout of fever, was driven to resort to a "brown silk cushion with a cap pinned to the top of it," artificial tresses being absolutely un procurable. But she was most impressed by the utter loneliness of men of our race in distant outposts, cut off in those days of slow transport and communication from all intercourse with their kind. She writes of a young Civilian who was "quite mad with delight," when invited to spend a week at their camp, and of a Captain N—— who had led that sort of life in the jungles too, and says that towards the end of the rainy season, when the health generally gives way, the lowness of spirits that comes on is quite dreadful; that every young man fancies he is going to die, and that he thinks that nobody will bury him if he does." "Never send a son to

India, my dear M.," she concludes, " that is the moral."

The whole party reached Cawnpore before Christmas, but the Governor-General was prevented, by a point of etiquette, from going on to Lucknow. As a king, Muhammed Ali Shah¹ had proved a success, and affairs went smoothly during the five years of his reign, but the poor old man was at this time almost bedridden and unable to do the honours in person. He therefore sent his son, the heir-apparent, to meet Lord Auckland at Cawnpore, where elaborate courtesies were interchanged, and at the conclusion of his tour the latter wrote to John Low :

MY DEAR SIR,

I wish that you would take an opportunity of mentioning to the King with less of formality than is incident to an official despatch, the real satisfaction which I have derived from his kindness to me on my march, & the unremitting attention of those who he despatched to me. . . .

You will be glad to know that my sisters are well.

Most faithfully Yours,

AUCKLAND.

To the Miss Edens, the same restriction had not applied, and they set forth from Cawnpore for a three-days' visit to Lucknow. After crossing the Ganges by a bridge of boats, the two ladies and one or two members of the suite accomplished the journey in carriages with relays of horses, excepting for one sandy stretch of three miles, when they mounted their elephants. The Residency is described by Emily Eden as "a fine

¹ On his accession Roshan-ud-daulah was dismissed and Hakim Mehdi recalled, but the latter, an old and broken man, died shortly after.

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house, not much furnished, but with a beautiful view from the windows, which is uncommon in this country." The British were engaged in a vigorous suppression of "thuggee" and the party were conducted to the prison by the officer in charge of that department, where one of the inmates admitted to having "turned off" three hundred people in the course of his practice, while a second could only boast of a paltry eighty.

They threw the noose over one of Col. L.'s surwars [sowars], who was cantering by, just to show how they could have strangled him. I think it a great shame allowing them to repeat their parts, but they really believe they have only done their duty. . . .

All these men regret very much they cannot teach their sons to walk in the right way.

Of the animal contests she writes :

There was a fight of wild beasts after breakfast, but we excused ourselves, as there often are accidents at these fights.

The gentlemen all went, & they were quite delighted & said we ought to have seen it.

The insurrection of the previous year is referred to rather oddly in her spritely, but somewhat superficial journal :

The late King drank himself to death about six months ago, & then there was a sort of revolution, *conducted by Col. L.*, (sic), who was nearly killed in this palace, by which the present King was placed on the throne.

In John Low's letter-book during this month is only one brief entry to the effect that he had written to his mother describing the Miss Eden's visit.

A few days after their departure, he left Lucknow to pay a flying farewell visit to Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was then on his way from Agra to Calcutta, receiving the following letter on his return :

CAMP, Jan. 7th, 1838.
MY DEAR LOW,

. . . It was most kind in you to take so long a journey to let us see you. Your visit was too short, & I had not half enough conversation with you. But all that could not be helped. It was a pleasure to see even a little of you. You were quite right to go as you did, & I am inclined to think it is the best way of parting.

. I have had many affecting partings since I determined on going home, & they are very painful, & would be almost intolerable did not the hope remain of meeting again.

You will do right, I think, to stay, either to rise to Council, or a Government, or the Governor-Generalship, or to secure what you consider ample for comfort in retirement. Many a man, I suspect, has repented of retiring too soon.

I do not at present regret my own retirement, & trust that I shall never have occasion to do so, but if I have, I shall console myself with the reflection that it was forced on me by circumstances that left me no other course consistent with my own credit.

I have not the most latent idea of ever returning to India. I am spoiled for a subordinate Government, which I have ever considered as inferior to a seat in the Council of India.¹ The Governor-Generalship even is no object of desire to me, for I have had enough of it to know that it has more cares than enjoyments.

But the Governor-Generalship is out of the question. It will never be offered to an Indian as long as we are going on prosperously here. . . .

If the state of affairs should become threatening, recourse may be had to local experience. . . . Should it

¹ Metcalfe had been a Member of the Supreme Council in 1827.

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under such circumstances be offered to me, I should think it a duty to accept it, but I should certainly not desire it, for it would not be a bed of roses, & if affairs ever begin to deteriorate, if the wind changes, it may not be easy to bring them right again.

If we go backward at all, we shall probably go rapidly. I should like to see our prosperity & power used with more wisdom, greater sympathy for Native States, & less selfishness in our policy, & I lament with you that this is not to be expected from the present Administration.

Neither is it from the Government at home, which has become most arbitrary in their treatment of Native States.

Accept my cordial wishes for your health & happiness. . . .

My affectionate regards to Mrs. Low. We shall be most anxious to hear of her well-doing. God bless you both.

Yours most sincerely

C. T. METCALFE.

A few weeks later, Augusta Low, whose babies arrived with placid regularity at intervals of from two to three years, gave birth to her second son, who received the name of Robert,¹ and John wrote to his mother to announce the event, and to express their delight at the arrival of a friend bringing the water-colour drawing of herself and the miniature of little Charlotte, which they had been awaiting. Emily Dick and her husband were on their way to England.

Feb. 8th, 1838.

. . . Yours is a striking likeness, & particularly valuable to Augusta & me as the only one I have had of you is a

¹ General Sir Robert Cunliffe Low, G.C.B. (1838-1911), 9th Bengal Cavalry. Fought through the Mutiny, Director of Transport on Lord Roberts's march from Kabul to Kandahar, Commanded the Chitral Relief Force. Appointed Keeper of the Crown Jewels in 1909. (He married in 1862 Constance, daughter of Captain R. Taylor, Bengal Cavalry.)



MRS. ROBERT LOW

From the miniature and water-colour drawing by Frederick Crickshank, 1836

“LITTLE DARLING CHARLOTTE”



LUCKNOW

caricature. . . . The Dicks hope to be at Clatto next September. . . . I trust that before you receive this that the building part of the improvements will be over. Pray be careful to have a mixture of trees.

I heard lately from William Deas, now at Hyderabad, where he & his wife are comfortably settled.

William Deas had returned as a bachelor from his long home furlough, to succumb to the charms of a girl of sixteen, the daughter of William Raynford Taylor, of the Madras Civil Service, shortly after his arrival in India.

His younger brother had just concluded a three-months' visit to his uncle at Lucknow, and the revelation of an incurrence of fresh debts on the part of that graceless youth had transpired.

In the following month Henry Shakespear died at Calcutta in his fifty-third year. The loss to his friends and relations was a very real one. When the news reached the Governor-General's camp, Emily Eden wrote to her sister :

RAEPOR^E, *Friday, March 30th.*

We had a melancholy letter to-day with an account of poor Mr. S's death. He died of abcess of the liver—of India in fact.

I think his health had begun to fail before we left Calcutta, but we had not heard of his being ill till a week ago. I am very sorry on all accounts. He was an excellent man, & very much to be loved. . . .

It is melancholy to think how almost all the people we have known at all intimately have in two years died off, & that out of a small society.

John Low's next letter to his mother was written in good spirits,—in spite of a further call of £1,000 per share which had been made by the Fife Bank creditors.

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LUCKNOW, *June 4th, 1838.*

. . . I am now come to an interesting, I might say exciting period of my career, for I am remitting home all I have saved, & purchasing India Stock, & the possession of it will give me some votes in the Court of Proprietors for the election of Directors etc.

I can now also be here only two more hot seasons, possibly only one, yet . . . the great advantage of staying here till 1840 is not merely the addition of £3,000 to my purse, but that I should in all probability reach the rank of Colonel without coming out at all.

I hope & think, however, that I don't think about money too much ; I certainly don't care to hoard it up or to have the reputation of being rich, nor, as Burns says, do I care about a "train attendant," but there is something very comfortable to my feelings to think that by staying only a little more than two years, I should secure the means of educating & providing for my children—(when I say providing for them, I only mean furnishing them with *the means of exerting themselves successfully in life*).

I am afraid you will be tired reading such a long story, so I shall conclude, but not without telling you that no one is more fully aware than myself of the *extreme uncertainty of all human schemes*. . . .

P.S. William & his wife are expected at Madras in the course of the present month.

News from home giving good news of the two children was received by the parents with delight and gratitude, frequently expressed in correspondence with both aunt and grandmother, but S. E. Low's letters were arriving at longer intervals. She wrote in January of this year :

. . . Malcolm is a very handsome child, & nobody more ready to show off his accomplishments than dear little Charlotte. She is quite enchanted with him.

All our family well, & likewise Aunt Hill ; she writes me long interesting letters.

Robert Malcolm is coming on well in his profession.

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John Malcolm [a younger brother] is now settled as a surgeon near to Darlington. He is a handsome lad & may perhaps marry well, which is no uncommon case with handsome young medical men.

Dr. Duncan,¹ a cadet of the Lundie family, in former days married the daughter of a Duke, & what was better, she had a large fortune. He was attending her, but could not find the disease, so she told him to turn up the Bible & mentioned Chap. & Verse.

The words were—"Thou art the man." She survived him, but left her money to his family, of which the present lord is the head.

Poor Mr. Macdonald has lost Mrs. Macdonald ; she died about a fortnight ago, she was struck with palsy, & never was able to speak except a few monosyllables ; she is an irreparable loss to him, & as such he feels it. I wrote what you said of Aleck Deas to Catherine. I thought it quite right she should know, & I hope she will write Aleck to send her no more presents ; it is downright mean in him to do so when he has recourse to borrowing, & taking credit for generosity. . . .

The next letter was written in the autumn ; her powers were beginning to fail and the reins were slipping from her grasp. Georgina, and Maria Bethune, both greatly under the dominant influence of Susan Foulis, were becoming increasingly absorbed in the sternly evangelical movement in the Scottish Church. Charlotte Mill was too warm-hearted and sociable—too like her mother in temperament, to be in sympathy, and Catherine remained resolutely unregenerate to the last !

. . . The dear children are in good health & spirits & as blythe as kids in the mountains.

I have received the £250, but send me no more for I have not the smallest occasion for it. . . .

¹ William Duncan, son of Alexander Duncan, of Lundie. He was appointed Physician Extraordinary to George the Third, and created a Baronet in 1764. His wife was Lady Mary Tufton, daughter of Sackville, Earl of Thanet.

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We had a delightful visit of Mr. & Mrs. Dick with their fine children.¹ Malcolm says that Aunt Dick is a *seet eater* (sweet creature) which she really is.

We had several weeks of a visit from Mrs. Mill, accompanied by the Count de Moligné. Mr. Mill was here part of the time; he is very fond of the Count, & the Edinburgh folk say he has adopted him, but that is nonsense. . . .

A lengthy postscript was added by Georgina:

MY DEAREST JOHN, Our Mother took a *large* sheet to answer you, but she finds writing rather a burden to her now, & I require to *urge* her to it, which is a great change. She is much weaker since an illness she had in the spring.

But if it pleases God to spare her till 40 in her present state, she will have great delight in the society of Augusta & yourself. William & Margaret we hope we shall see in less than twelve months from this date.

You must upon no account send the other £250. It is gratifying for our mother to do *something* for you, therefore don't *hurt her feelings* by sending more.

The improvements are over now; the water we find a great luxury. I have been quite a *woman of business* this year, for I have paid all the work people & kept the accounts.

I am sorry to hear that you have been ailing, but I hope it will be our Almighty Father's will to keep you all well now, & may every trial bring us more & more to put our trust in Him who knoweth what is good for us. I think Susan & Maria are far advanced Christians, & take infinite pains upon their children, & are much in prayer for them. . . . Your sincerely attached sister,

G. M. Low.

Although for twenty years John Low's services had been exclusively in the political line, everything connected with the army was very near his heart. Two of his oldest friends were now Directors of the East India Company, Lieut.-Colonel Vans Agnew, formerly like himself an

¹ Emily Dick had given birth to two more children.

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officer in the Madras Army, and General Sir James Lushington,¹ Chairman of the Company. To the former, he wrote at this time on the dangers of stagnation which attended slow promotion and the retention of old and physically unfit men as Commanding Officers of regiments, and urging on him the necessity—

for such prospects & hopes being created by the regulations as will secure officer's doing their duty efficiently & cheerfully, & prevent our seniors from becoming a set of worn-out & apathetic old fellows, unfit for exertions either of mind or body.

... Even now the Govt. (so Casement told me very recently) find the utmost difficulty in getting Brigadiers that are not quite infirm worn out men.

Troublous times were at hand ; the recent siege of Herat by the Persians, directed by Russian officers, had intensified the ever-recurrent anxiety as to Russian intrigues in Asia.

The invasion of Afghanistan was about to be launched, the frontiers were uneasy, and farther afield trouble was brewing in both China and Burma which finally led to war.

Nearer home—when the following letter was penned, Nepaul was considered one of the chief danger zones.

LUCKNOW, Oct. 15th, 1838.
MY DEAR LUSHINGTON,

I fully intended to have written to you by the last steamer about the state of our wars, or rather rumours of wars, but I was too unwell.

Of Burmese affairs I know nothing excepting from news-

¹ General Sir James Lushington, G.C.B., Chairman of the East India Co., M.P. for Petersfield 1825, Hastings 1826, Carlisle 1827-32.

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papers. The Nepaulese have beyond a doubt been intriguing much against us, & they have been fortifying their principal pass. . . . An ample force has been secretly warned for Nepaul if war becomes inevitable, & is to be commanded by Maj.-Gen. Oglander.

The grand army under Sir Henry Fane will positively be assembled next month at Ferozepore, & will commence its march to Candahar about the 30th November, via Shikapore. Why this dreadfully circuitous route has been fixed upon I have never been able to learn.

You must of course have been fully informed, & therefore I need not say more except to lament the necessity of it.

Here, I mean in Oude, we are entirely quiet, & hear nothing to the contrary in Scindia's country, or from Central India or the Deccan. The only thing that I fear (& enough too) is the dreadful expense of sending so large an army to such a distance, & the future inconvenience that must follow extending our position so enormously as to take military occupation of Candahar, Cabool, etc., on the other side of the Indus, for I suspect that we shall *never* be able to withdraw our troops from those countries. . . .

The following day a letter reached Lucknow from Mr. Brian Hodgson, British Agent at Katmandu.

MY DEAR LOW,

I hope you are better. Send me word. The accompanying despatch will show you that Nepaul is likely to be quiet for the present, but still there may be prudence in a defensive cordon for the cold season, *provided it be adequate*, which I don't think the one now ordered is. Gen. Oglander will show you my letter to him, & pray tell me what you think.

Send the present despatch, after perusal, to Wade,¹ Alwes & Sutherland, & do tell the former to let us know what stirs beyond the Sutledge.

¹ Captain, later Sir Claude Martine Wade (1794-1861), who was for seventeen years in charge of the entire dealings with Ranjit Singh.

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He shall see our despatches, & let him send copies of his, for as things go in Cabool, so will Nepaul decide on acting.

Ever Yours,
H. B. HODGSON.

The original of the enclosed dispatch had been sent to Macnaghten, who was with the Governor-General at Simla, still acting in the capacity of Political Secretary.

The causes of friction with the Nepaulese Durbar were many, and it is admittedly due to the influence of Hodgson that war with that country was averted.

The concentration of troops under Sir Henry Fane took place on November 28th. Two members of the Lucknow circle were destined to take part in the "political drama in Afghanistan," but they were cast for very different rôles. Aleck Deas' regiment, the 5th Bengal Native Infantry, was already in cantonments. Richmond Shakespear, resigning his appointment in the Survey Department, was attached to the 6th Light Camel Battery, and paid a visit to the Lucknow Residency on his way to Ferozepore.

Over two months earlier the Persians had withdrawn from Herat, and the Russian menace was temporarily suspended, but Dost Mahomed, the strong Afghan ruler, originally friendly to the British, had been alienated by Auckland's mistaken policy, and in the Simla Manifesto of November 8th the substitution of the exiled Sadozai prince, the weak and undependable Shah Shuja, was announced.

The combined armies made a halt of fourteen days at Ferozepore. It was an extraordinary

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assembly ; in addition to the Company's troops, six thousand half-disciplined men, under British officers, had been collected in India to form an army for Shah Shuja, and Ranjit Singh, most faithful of our allies, had been bribed, somewhat reluctantly, to join forces in supporting the latter's cause.

On December 6th the troops were reviewed, and on a later day the old Maharajah paraded his own regiments in person, and their smart appearance caused astonishment to all the British present. Richmond wrote to one of his sisters :

Most of us were surprised at their discipline. His infantry is capital, drilled by French officers & well equipped.

and Emily Eden characteristically comments :

All the gentlemen went out at daybreak to Runjeet's review, & came back rather discomfited. They (the troops) were quite as well disciplined & rather better dressed [than ours].

Richmond, however, did not think highly of the Sikh Artillery, and classed their Cavalry as miserable.

Lord Auckland and the Maharajah were throughout on the most cordial terms, and the culminating point was reached by the presentation of a portrait of the young Queen, painted by Emily Eden (it must have been more or less a fancy sketch);¹ the frame, provided by the Company, was of solid gold, encrusted with precious stones, and had been the work of forty jewellers, working day and

¹ The Queen's accession had taken place after Lord Auckland reached India.

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night. The appearance of the redoubtable old man as described by "the artist," was not impressive. He was most simply dressed in red cloth, and wore no jewels—"looking exactly like an old mouse with grey whiskers and one eye."

The presentation was well staged, and the guns which roared forth the royal salute were those of Richmond's camel battery.

Sir W. C. [Willoughby Cotton] with some of our gentlemen marched up the room with my picture of the Queen on a green & gold cushion.

All the English stood up & a salute of 21 guns was fired. R. took it in his hand, though it was a great weight, & examined it for at least five minutes with his one piercing eye—then said it was the most gratifying present he could have received.

Before the camp broke up Ranjit Singh was taken seriously ill; the days of the "Lion of the Punjab" were numbered, and his death in June of the following year was but another of the fatalities which attended the Afghan adventure.

In consequence of the withdrawal of the Persians from Herat, one division of "the Army of the Indus" was kept back, and Aleck Deas' regiment did not start until much later.

In December the ill-fated expedition left Ferozepore, and Macnaghten, for so many years engaged in peaceful attendance on successive Governors-General, was chosen to accompany Shah Shujah¹ in the dual capacity of Minister and Envoy.

He departed from India in the most sanguine frame of mind, in charge of his puppet king. "It

¹ Shah Shujah (1780-1842), King of Afghanistan 1803-09, had been driven out of his country and had since been living as a pensioner on British territory.

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will be easy to seat Shah Shujah," he had written to John Low one month earlier, little knowing the difficulties in store to *retain* an undesired and unpopular monarch on that uneasy throne.

At this time John, with his wife and child, was most reluctantly making his way to Calcutta, *en route* for the Cape. He had been for some time out of health and had been warned by the doctors that unless he took "a cooling and complete relaxation from business for 12 or 15 months" he would become dangerously ill. Augusta, too, had long been ailing. John Shakespear, taking his first long furlough, was accompanying them to the Cape, but at Calcutta he lost his heart, and embarked in a melancholy frame of mind.

With the exception of Richmond and Emily Dick, all John Talbot Shakespear's children met on this occasion at the Irvine's house, and the infatuation of his eldest brother was not allowed by George to go unhonoured and unsung.

The damsel, for some reason dubbed by the family "the Maiden of the Gully," was apparently not approved of, for one stanza concludes :

" But then they say I mayn't propose
For the maiden of the Gully."

and he himself wrote from sea to his sister Marianne :

I would have acted most imprudently in prosecuting my
love passage with that most bewitching of young ladies.

They embarked at the end of January ; Charlotte Crawford was sailing with them to the Cape, on her way to England, and Augusta, who since her marriage had lived in semi-regal state, and

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never had more than one baby in stock at a time, wrote to Marianne with somewhat Olympian detachment :

Dear Charlotte has so many cares with her four Babas that she keeps her cabin all day. . . .

Dearest Girl, I shall always look back to those weeks we spent with you as some of the happiest moments of my life. . . .

We dine every day at four o'clock, & sit on deck till bedtime ; no one of the ladies appears out till dinner-time. It all appears to me most dismal.

She was suffering from depression, consequent on fever, and her husband, following medical advice, made arrangements to send her and the child home from the Cape, where he rented a cottage close to the town. However, a few weeks later he wrote again :

Augusta being almost quite well, has resolved to stay here with me.

William Low, having remained long enough in Madras to secure the desired step in promotion, joined the party for a month or two on his way home. John thus met his sister-in-law for the first (and last) time, but in days when intimacies were formed and sustained through the sole medium of letters, they must have met as old friends. It was decided that the baby should be sent home in "the William's" care. The little boy was a year and a half old, and as they had never yet kept a child for so long the parting was more keenly felt.

To his brother John handed an open letter to Georgina ; thoughts and plans about his Scotch home were ever circling in his mind, and in the

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eventuality of his mother not surviving until his return, his last proposal was that :

William & Margaret should live at Clatto & be master & mistress of the house, William paying to Georgina the whole of the children's expenses, & not interfering in the slightest degree in their management.

My first & earnest thought is that G. should *never* leave Clatto, & that she will be our guest to the end of their lives. . . .

I should like to see Charlotte & Malcolm *patronising* & taking care of Robert. . . .

They did not remain childless for long ; six months after parting with the little Robert, Augusta gave birth to another son, who received the name of John,¹ and they remained for ten months longer at the Cape, their stay having lasted for a year and a half.

¹ John Alwes Low (1840-1932), Captain R.A. Invalided young from the Service in consequence of sunstroke, following on long illness in India. He recovered bodily vigour, but his mental condition remained permanently impaired.

CHAPTER XI

Richmond Shakespear's Journey to Khiva, 1839-40. The Story of Patrick Vans Agnew

AN old and valued friend had now been lost to the Clatto circle, and at Strathvithie, with his children and unmarried sisters, Peter Cleghorn reigned as laird in his father's stead.

The old man had long been companioned by the thought of death. His life had been laid on unusual lines, in that he had spent his youth as a University Professor, the adventurous period setting in when he was in middle life as a married man with a large family, and a passage in a letter to his son proves that his outlook was far wider than that afforded by the current theology of his time.

. . . There is another world, & it is time for all, more particularly for me, to reflect on that world of spirits into which I soon must enter.

Religion inculcates, & reason irresistibly proclaims that all things are under the direction of the Sovereign Creator & Sustainer of Universal Nature . . ., that every event is conducted to the best of purposes, & that we ought therefore quietly to submit to the determination of an All-knowing Power, who sees at one glance the whole chain of the Universe, & is infallibly qualified to determine what is fit & proper for the whole, & also for the needs of every individual whom He has called to a temporary existence upon earth.

The last letter from his mother—the last at least of the collection, reached her son while still

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at the Cape. The family had been exercised over the bad condition of health of Catherine Deas' daughter, following an attack of smallpox.

CLATTO, *July 15th, 1839.*

MY DEAREST JOHN,

... My building is now over. The Cleghorns are in Edin^r. at present. Cathey Deas is considered as better. God grant her a permanent recovery. Catherine does not seem alarmed at her situation. Little Charlotte & Malcolm are in high health & Charlotte going on with her education.

Poor Lady Flora Hastings ¹ is dead ; by her own desire her body was opened, which refutes the base scandal that was propagated about her, but you will have all that in the papers.

I fancy the Dicks will not be in Scotland this year, Sir Robert is not at home at present. . . .

Ever Your truly affecte mother,

S. E. Low.

To this was appended another of Georgina's conscientious postscripts :

DEAREST JOHN, I see our Mother speaks of Charlotte's *education*. Now she is merely getting reading, spelling & a little grammar. Our Mother had begun her French, but a few days ago I beseeched her to let it alone, for owing to her deafness, she never heard whether she said "une" or "un," & other little things that require acuteness of ear.

Malcolm is coming on slower than Charlotte did at his time, but his memory is far better in repeating his hymns. . . . Both of them are ready to acknowledge their faults when they *cool* upon them.

¹ Daughter of the second Marquess of Hastings (and granddaughter to Lord Moira, the Governor-General of India), who was Maid of Honour to the Duchess of Kent. The accusation against her roused all the latent chivalry of the nation and even temporarily jeopardized the popularity of the throne. The Queen, as the poor girl herself protested, had however been kind and sympathetic throughout. Her death resulted from enlargement of the liver.

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William Dick had now retired, and one member of the Shakespear family had said good-bye to India for good. He and his wife were living at Ware in Hertfordshire, where he had bought a house.

Meanwhile the youngest brother was pursuing his adventurous career in Afghanistan, and writing by every available opportunity to his sisters. On the 16th March, 1839, the Bengal Army entered the Bolan Pass, intending to make a halt at Quetta.

The pass, nearly sixty miles in length, took six days to cross, the strain on the baggage animals being terrible. The stream of the Bolan was tainted by the dead bodies of camels, and Richmond wrote :

the road was literally strewn with them ; the poor beasts went on to the last moment, then stopped & sat down. They made no struggle or noise, but wait patiently till death puts an end to their sufferings.

With the camels of his own battery he carried through successfully :

They toiled along untired, but very slowly, over parts of the road where the Horse Artillery had been obliged to use drag-ropes.

On reaching Quetta—a miserable collection of mud houses, the unfortunate troops had to be put on famine rations.

An enormous quantity of stores had been abandoned in the Pass. Richmond, however, was able to collect enough provisions for the march to Kandahar, when the army started on April 7th.

It now became necessary to make the best arrangements we could to prevent our unfortunate servants from starv-

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ing, & I was fortunate enough to secure 3 maunds of attah (ground wheat), a bullock to carry the same, & 12 sheep, so that my tail, which has, I grieve to say 18 joints, reached Kandahar in fine condition.

It lay 150 miles distant, and in the Khojak Pass, fifty miles to the north-west of Quetta, there was again horrible confusion ; many of the cavalry horses, unable to go farther from exhaustion, were mercifully shot. The Camel Battery, using drag-ropes, got over without loss, assisting also the heavy guns and wagons over the steep gradients of the narrow defile. One of the wagons, breaking loose, knocked Richmond down :

Both wheels passed over me very lightly. The ground was soft, & after two or three hours I was able to walk about again, & in two or three days as well as ever again.

Kandahar was reached on April 25th, where the army remained inactive till the 27th June, a weary time for the troops, for in spite of green fields and running streams, food was scarce and there was much sickness in camp. It was not Richmond's fate to get to Kabul at this time, nor was he present at the taking of Ghazni, for a few days before the departure of the army from Kandahar, he was selected to accompany Major D'Arcy Todd on a special Mission to Herat. On learning of his appointment as Artillery officer to the Mission, he wrote in high spirits to Emily Dick. He had just heard of his brother John's love affair at Calcutta and asks his sister if this item of "intelligence" had reached her.

... The old gentleman seems to have been really smitten, but he was hurried off too soon, at least for his

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ideas of propriety. Bless his prudence, he never will be married unless some fine dame saves him the trouble of proposing.

His estimate of the Afghans was that they were "the worst race of natives that we have ever met. They have every vice, and we have not yet discovered one redeeming quality." He was fortunate in his companions. Both Major Todd, and Captain James Abbott, another officer of the Mission with whom he was closely associated, were, like himself, officers of Bengal Artillery and men of exceptionally fine character. On arrival at Herat, he was looking forward to establishing a foundry and powder manufactory, and having spent twenty of the preceding twenty-eight months under canvas, he describes himself as "a very uncouth creature."

They reached their destination on July 25th. The nominal ruler of Herat, Shah Kamran, was an old and effete man; brave and active in his youth, he was now paying the penalty of an evil self-indulgent life, and all power was vested in the hands of his Minister or Vizier, Yar Mahomed, in whom the typical Afghan qualities of cupidity, cruelty and treachery were more than usually developed. The party, consisting of six British officers and an escort of thirty sepoys, were fortunate in gaining Herat in safety, for they carried with them thirty lakhs of treasure. On the 28th July, Richmond sent an account of the journey to Marianne Irvine.

... We arrived here . . . after a very fatiguing march. The whole distance between Kandahar and this is 371 miles . . . It [the road] was nothing but a mere path through the mountains and all our cattle suffered terribly

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... At the river Farrah we halted three days, and caught some fine fish, and ate the most delicious grapes, each grape as large as a greengage and of the most exquisite flavour ... The Wuzzeer came out to meet us with about two hundred infantry and eight or nine hundred cavalry. The latter were splendidly mounted, but the infantry were worse than any I have ever seen before. All the population lined the streets as we passed on to the palace. This is in the citadel, and the rooms in it are worse than most Bunneah's shops in Hindustan.

After waiting some time, we were introduced to the Hall of Audience, a most miserable hovel, at the further corner of which sat a little shrivelled creature with a long beard. To him we advanced slowly, bowing occasionally, and at length seated ourselves. The Envoy (Major Todd) then delivered a long speech, and then we arose, bowed and retreated like crabs, never turning our backs on Majesty, and bowed and bowed until we reached the door ... We dined the other night with the Wuzzeer, sitting on the ground and eating with our fingers. The dishes were well cooked and I was very hungry, but still I could not get on at all. Indeed I know nothing more horrible than to see men tearing and devouring joints of meat like monkeys eating plantains ...

We are living in a garden and building quarters for ourselves against the winter.

They had found the former Resident, Eldred Pottinger, to whose exertions the successful defence of the city against the Persian attack had been mainly due, preparing to leave. From Yar Mahomed, in lieu of thanks, he had received insults, and the courteous reception of the Mission was solely to be ascribed to the arrival in Afghanistan of the Company's Army, and a lively hope of favours to come in the form of further subsidies.

Richmond's next letters, to William and Emily Dick, were very happy ones. He had undertaken the survey of the valley of Herat, the climate was delightful and the scenery most lovely, while for

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amusement there was pig-sticking, a form of sport which was unknown to the inhabitants.

. . . By the way, I surprised the natives much by spearing a hog the other day off Mr. Coverley. The hog charged three times in good style and Coverley behaved very nobly.

His reflections on the political situation prove that he, like so many others, believed that Lord Auckland had backed the wrong horse.

. . . Had we made a treaty with Dost Mahommed and the Kandahar chiefs many years back, we might now have avoided sending this force across the Indus.

About this time a report reached Herat that a Russian Army was being assembled at Orenburg to march upon Khiva; the British Chargé d'Affaires at Erzerum had already written to Lord Palmerston in London, and Pottinger at once sent the news to Macnaghten at Kabul. It caused a ferment of excitement both at home and in India. Lord Auckland was informed that the force consisted of 3,000 Cossacks, 800 mounted Artillerymen and 12 light field-pieces; other rumours gave the numbers as much larger. The little State of Khiva was on the border of Cossack country, and the Russians had real cause for grievance, the expedition being ostensibly to exact compensation for depredations on their caravans of merchandise which had time and again been pillaged, and to rescue their unfortunate subjects who had been captured and detained as slaves. The British, however, suspected ulterior motives in the dispatch of so large a force, and had no wish to see the Russian Empire extended in Central Asia.

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Major Todd thereupon determined to be first in the field, and dispatched Captain Abbott to Khiva to negotiate with the Khan of that country for the release of the captives, and thus remove the Russian *casus belli*. It was a brave decision, made entirely on his own responsibility. Abbott left Herat on December the 24th, 1839, reaching Khiva in the middle of January. He remained there for nearly two months, starting early in March for Russia, bearing a letter from the Khan of Khiva to the Tsar, and for three months no more was heard of him. The Russians had retaliated in kind, seizing and holding a number of Khivan subjects, and he had been able to persuade the Khan to promise to release his prisoners if the Tsar would undertake to do the same. By that time it was known at Khiva that the invading army had retreated—the news of its failure was announced in the public journals of St. Petersburg on the 13th of March. The Russians had been routed by forces more relentless than any human foe. It was with them as it had been in their own country with an incomparably greater invading host twenty-eight years before—“il neigeait, il neigeait toujours”—and in that bleak, inhospitable region, pestilence and famine completed the work. Peroffski, the unfortunate commander, discredited on his return, committed suicide.

From dispatches which reached Herat in May, Todd learnt, to his relief, that the Government approved of his action, and as Abbott had disappeared into the void, he determined to send Richmond Shakespear to Khiva. Richmond started on the 13th May, and his party, including

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an escort provided by the Vizier, totalled thirty, with thirty-five horses and mules. With the four principal of his native companions he associated closely, having meals in common with them during the entire journey. One of these, Fazil Khan, who remained with him until his return to India, he described as “a fine specimen of the troopers of the Irregular Horse of India, fearing neither man nor devil, and obeying the orders of his immediate superior to the very letter.” Richmond was advised to wear native dress, and with his great height, and a newly grown beard, he must have made a fine figure of an Afghan, but the six-foot circumference of the trousers did not please him. The beard he appears to have cherished, for he describes it to Emily Dick as being “four inches long and of very fair appearance.” Under his clothes, round his waist, he carried 300 ducats, and £900 was distributed in this way amongst the party.

Khiva¹ was reached on June the 12th, and by a curious coincidence that very day news of Abbott’s fate was brought in. He was found on the shores of the Caspian, a prisoner in the hands of the Cossacks. After enduring many hardships, he had been badly wounded, losing two fingers of his right hand, and some of his servants had been sold into slavery. Luck had been against him, a fact which throws into higher relief the generosity of the following passage which occurs in the account of his journey, which was published

¹ Richmond Shakespear’s journal, giving the account of his ride to Khiva and the subsequent journey to Orenburg, was published in *Blackwood* in June, 1842, and republished in their series, *Travel, Adventure and Sport*.

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many years later.¹ The Khan's offer to exchange captives had been made with the menace of the Russian advance hanging like the sword of Damocles over his country, and Abbott had felt doubtful if the promise would be kept under changed conditions :

. . . And I am still of opinion that had any officer of less genius, prudence and engaging manners than Captain Shakespear been sent after me to Khiva, the negotiations might have had a different result from the brilliant conclusion to which his prompt and judicious mediation brought it.

On the very day of his arrival at Khiva, Richmond managed to write letters to two of his sisters. He had good quarters, with a capital garden, under the trees of which he spent most of his time, and of the country around he says : " I have never in India seen the ground more carefully cultivated or more densely populated ; the whole country is beautifully wooded." From the first he found favour in the Khan's sight, so much so that that potentate issued a special order that the young Feringhee officer was at all times to be admitted to his presence, a privilege of which, as with wishes in a fairy tale, the stranger was to avail himself on two crucial occasions ; and as the result of many confidential interviews in a favourite spot in the garden, a royal fiat went forth that all Russian captives in and around the town of Khiva were to be collected and handed

¹ *Journey from Herat to Khiva, Moscow and St. Petersburg* (W. H. Allen, London, 1884). The messenger who had reached Abbott with letters from Major Todd frightened the Cossacks into releasing him, and accompanied him to the neighbourhood of Nova Alexandroff, from whence he found his way to St. Petersburg.

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over to his care. It was no easy matter. By August the 3rd, when he and his party had moved out nine miles, to Zaca, the number totalled 325 men, 18 women and 11 children, but he had reason to believe that the tally was not complete. One of the released women had a little daughter of nine, named Shureefa, actually in the possession of a lady in the Khivan palace, who refused to part with her. Richmond therefore made use of his special permit to obtain an interview, and knowing that to refuse a petition to a traveller setting forth on a journey was an offence against Turkoman custom, he proffered his request. The Khan urged that the child was happy and did not wish to go, but to this Richmond pleaded that she was not of age :

... He [the Khan] was silent for some time ; at length, turning to the Minister, he muttered, " Give him the girl."

The head-man of a village, known to have acquired a young Russian as a slave, swore on the Book that the boy had subsequently died, but the *finalé* of that episode was that the lad was dug by three of Richmond's troopers out of the vault in which he had been hidden.

The matter of the collection was, in fact, carried out in the most dilatory manner possible, and realizing how much precious time was being lost, the special permit was once more brought into play, and Richmond told the Khan that unless the complete number of captives was forthcoming he would proceed no further in the matter.

... His Majesty was astounded at my plain speaking and gave his Minister an order in a tone which made him shake.

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After this fateful interview matters were expedited, and the numbers swelled to 416 men, women and children—released from lifelong slavery. The Khan was also persuaded to issue an order prohibiting any further capturing of Russian subjects.

Richmond's difficulties were, however, far from over. He knew well that, in order to ensure the safe delivery of his flock into their own country, it would be necessary to go himself, and this entailed conveying them and their belongings across 400 miles of desert country to Nova Alexandroff, on the shores of the Caspian Sea. It was, moreover, a perilous undertaking in the only manner which could exert a depressing influence on a high-spirited young man. He had no permission to go beyond Khiva. Before his departure, he wrote to Emily Dick :

... I have been obliged to take considerable degree of responsibility on myself, which naturally makes so young a politico feel rather nervous, and yet I can hardly think it possible that Government will not approve of my proceedings.

A few days later, when he had started on the march, he wrote again to the same sister :

... This is all very fine, but perhaps the poor politico will be well wigged for his officiousness instead of receiving thanks. ... I would give all I possess to know what is the opinion of the Powers-that-be on a letter I wrote just a month ago. It is very painful waiting two or three months for a letter by which you must either live or die.

On leaving Khiva, he recounts :

... I gave each man a ducat and have hired a camel for every two. They all seemed, poor people, very grateful, and altogether it was one of the pleasantest duties I have ever executed.

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And when crossing one of the stages over the steppe, he says in his journal :

... The whole of the prisoners were together—it was a glorious sight to pass them. They speak no European language but their own and our only mode of salutation was the "Az salam Allie-koum." This they shouted out to me as I rode by them: thus the salutation, which a true Mussulman will not exchange with an infidel, became the only greeting between Christians.

The last sixteen marches were the most difficult on account of scarcity of water, but at length the long trek came to an end.

'DUSHT KULLA (Nova Alexandroff), on the Caspian Sea.
13th September, 1840.

MY DEAR MARIANNE,

I thank God from my heart that I have been enabled to reach this in safety without the loss of man, woman or child. Heaven had mercy on the unfortunate prisoners and granted us most favourable weather; not a man or child or woman suffered from thirst, hunger or fatigue, not even a camel or yaboo lost . . . Let me die when I may, I have *not* now lived in vain.

At the last moment the camel-owners and the Khan's troopers refused to go within six miles of the Russian fort, a distressing predicament, for it entailed marooning the prisoners' scanty but precious possessions, and it would, moreover, have created a bad impression to have brought in the party without their goods. Richmond, however, was equal to the situation; he ordered the camels to be all unloaded and then offered ten ducats for the hire of twenty of their number, pledging his word for their safe return. The cavalcade then went forwards :

... The men marched in line, with the camels carrying the women and children close in the rear, and thus we

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approached the Russian fortress. The worthy Commandant was overpowered with gratitude. His receiving charge of the prisoners would make a fine picture, and was a scene I can never forget. It was pleasing to see the prisoners rush to greet their countrymen . . . They stare at my beard and the Afghan costume and at the prisoners and doubt their own eyes.

A letter was sent by the Commandant, acknowledging the receipt of the prisoners, in which he says :

. . . On their arrival at this fortress, in answer to my enquiry, they expressed themselves unanimously grateful to you as father and benefactor from the time of their being taken out of bondage, and during the journey from Khiva to this fortress.

On the 17th of September Richmond parted with his retinue, and embarked for Goorieff, arriving there on the 23rd after a roughish passage, from thence continuing the journey to Orenburg by carriage, *en route* for St. Petersburg. From Orenburg he wrote to his brother-in-law, Major Irvine, saying that he expected to be in that place again in forty days on his way back to Herat or Khiva :

. . . My poor beard alas ! has fallen . . . the separation was not made without many a sigh. . . . The Russian Government has liberated all the Khivan caravans with other prisoners of Khiva (six hundred in number), allowing them to return to their homes *with their property*. . . . Over one thousand persons freed and all further kidnapping stopped is a gratifying reflection for an Artillery sub. As we say at Herat, "Barozee Kiamit me urzud," which being interpreted means, " Will be of service at the Day of Judgment."

For the journey to Moscow he purchased two springless carriages, and never in all his wanderings, so he recounts in his letters, did he suffer so much. Three or four wretched ponies were

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driven abreast by a furious Jehu, while the unfortunate travellers lay at full length on a layer of grass at the bottom of vehicles shaped like small boats. From Moscow to St. Petersburg, he and his faithful retainer, Fazil Khan, proceeded by diligence in great comfort. On arrival he was received with open arms by the English community, but although he was presented to the Emperor and Empress, the Russian Governmental circles, somewhat naturally, were *not* pleased to see him and demonstrated the same by ignoring his presence.

“The Russians are much annoyed,” he wrote to Emily Dick, “but have formed friendly relations with Khiva, at least have commenced doing so, and no army advances this year on Khiva.”¹

He was detained for some time in St. Petersburg, not knowing his eventual destination, but hoping against hope to be allowed to revisit England, and on February 3rd, to his great joy, he was sent to London, carrying dispatches from the British Ambassador, Lord Clanricarde. It was well that he did not return to Herat, which he would have found denuded of all his former comrades.

Yar Mahommed had been discovered in treasonable correspondence with the Persians, and his conduct in all respects had become so intolerable that Major Todd² had withdrawn the Mission.

¹ The Russians eventually took Khiva, but not until 1873, thirty-three years later.

² Todd returned to life in cantonments, where he was regarded as an exceptionally efficient officer. After some years of married happiness, his young wife died. “Called away,” as he wrote to a friend, “from the open grave,” he fell on December 21st, 1845, at the battle of Ferozeshah.

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In so doing he was considered by those who understood the needs of the moment, to have acted rightly, but the withdrawal proved politically inopportune, and he was censured by Lord Auck-land and removed from political employ.

In a letter to James Outram,¹ after quitting Herat, Todd refers rather touchingly to the success of the Khivan Negotiations, the credit for the inception of which was his alone :

Your kind letter . . . reached me a few days ago. I would fain send you an adequate return, but I am out of sorts, & besides have but little to tell you.

Shakespear's proceedings have been in all respects admirable. The zeal, perseverance & judgment he has displayed throughout his arduous undertaking, entitle him to the highest praise. . . .

The property restored by Russia is valued at upwards of a crore of rupees, & the number of merchants & others released exceeds 600 ; Shakespear's name has been inserted in the calendar of Oosbeg saints !

The Russians, by liberating their captives immediately on the arrival of Shakespear & his " company," have given a strong proof that they are unwilling or unable to renew their attempt on Khiva ; & I hope that they will now be prevented taking up that formidable position on the road to India.

I cannot help congratulating myself on even the small share which I have had in these proceedings.

During Richmond's stay in England, which was of short duration, he made his headquarters at Ware, helping his " dearest old lady " with her " parterres." Francis Thackeray had died a month or two earlier, but his eldest son, then a boy of nine, vividly recalled in after years his

¹ Outram had been on the staff of Sir John Keane, greatly distinguishing himself at the battle of Ghazni.

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cousin's unexpected appearance at the quiet vicarage :

I remember Richmond Shakespear suddenly turning up one evening with his native servant carrying a long rifle, & crying out to my mother—"What! don't you remember Richmond?"

and in years to come, another cousin¹ wrote of this visit to England :

When he came to London the cousins & playmates of early Indian days met once more & shook hands. "Can I do anything for you?" I remember the kind fellow asking. He was always asking that question: of all kinsfolk, of all widows & orphans, of all the poor, of young men who might need his purse or his service.

On August 31st, 1841, at the age of twenty-nine, he was knighted by the Queen at Buckingham Palace, on which occasion he was said to have stumbled at the crucial moment!

George Shakespear, still in his jungly district in Bengal, on hearing of Richmond's honour, at once burst into song, but for want of sufficient data was not able to proceed far with his stanzas, which were inscribed, with other family efforts, in a book kept by the adoring Selina.

KHIVA'S KNIGHTHOOD

Captive Russians all forlorn, wailed their fates to Khiva borne,

When their Czar the tidings heard, mightily his spirit stirred

Pufflertowski,² thou art he, should engage the enemy,
Onward armed thy children lead, let the Khivan caitiffs bleed!

If thy task be nobly done, name the meed thou wilt have won.

¹ Thackeray, in *On Lett's Diary*.

² Peroffski.

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Hurry, hurry to the field, Cossack lance & Georgian shield,
Hetman stern, & fiery Bey, raise your horsemen, urge away,
Cuirassiers, moustached dragoons, infantry in dense platoon,
Follow with what speed ye may, danger waits upon delay,
Guns directed from the rear, thundering keep the passage
clear,

Camels tower in the van, death unto the lagging man,
If the passage quick be won, the day is ours, the task is done,
If with snow the path is crossed, to a man ye all are lost . . .

Thus far the muse had proceeded upon the high stepping horse, but rather unceremoniously found herself obliged to alight from a want of the proper details of the campaign, which the Knight hath not supplied to me, & I observed that the lady muse could only just flog herself up with :

List'ner, now my task is done, thus was Khiva's knighthood won.

G. T. S.

John Low and his wife had meanwhile left the Cape, reaching Calcutta in December, 1840, and Augusta, remaining on with the Irvines after her husband and brother returned to their post, made arrangements for embarking the last baby on his homeward voyage, after which, taking Selina with her, she started on her journey up the Ganges in a "flat" towed by one of the Company's two river steamers, which only sailed once a month, and had proved such a popular mode of conveyance, that berths had to be booked long in advance.

The steamers, of 200 tons burthen, and 120 ft. long by 22 ft. in width, had little room for freight and none for passengers, who were accommodated in a barge, very much like Noah's Ark in appearance, with tiers of shuttered windows and a flat roof, covered by an awning, which served as a promenade deck. Selina enjoyed the journey, but remarks that it was prolonged by frequent groundings on sand-banks.

At Benares, where the sisters disembarked to

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pay a visit to the old Hallidays, the gang-plank gave way under Augusta's weight, and she was precipitated into the Ganges, being however fished out none the worse. It is no continuous panorama that memory presents to the aged, but rather isolated pictures, which surge against the background of the years. In her staccato style, Selina recorded a few fleeting impressions of these days in her *Reminiscences*.

I was very happy in Lucknow—your dear father, like a father to me, so idolized & so hospitable.

And your mother, tall & dignified. We used to spend the hot weather very much in the Tai-Khana,¹ & the garden was lovely. In the Banqueting House grand breakfasts used to be given to the royal family.

I used to like spending a few days at Dilkoosha, then one of the King's country palaces. . . .

Uncle John took me out generally in his buggy, & one sowar followed. John was fond of spouting poetry as we went along, emphasizing favourite bits with his whip.

In another passage she speaks again of :

happy memories of the dear old Residency. Young ladies, being scarce, were made so much of. There were then three regiments in cantonments, a list was kept of all who were to be regularly invited, & a very pleasant set they were. A good deal of music, & sometimes "tableaux Vivants."

An earlier inmate of the Residency had now been long with his regiment at Kabul. In September, 1839, the Bombay division had returned to India, but the greater part of the Bengal Army, which included young Deas's regiment, had remained on in Afghanistan. Honours were showered on all the principal figures concerned in the occupation. Lord Auckland was made

¹ The underground chamber.

an Earl, Sir John Keane became Baron Keane of Ghazni, and Macnaghten was given a baronetcy. The troops had settled in, not unhappily: the climate, excepting during the extreme rigour of winter, was delightful, the country was beautiful and abounded in delicious fruits, and in the city pony races, and amusements of many kinds, were the order of the day.

Such security was felt that a party of Irregular Cavalry was sent to escort Lady Sale and Lady Macnaghten to Afghanistan, and the wives of other officers joined their husbands in Kabul. The isolated actions which took place during these years were attended with varying success to British arms, but when in November, 1840, Dost Mahomed,¹ most formidable of our foes, rode up to the walls of the city, attended by a single horseman, to surrender, the exultation was great. Far more anxiety was felt as to conditions on the frontiers, and affairs in China and Burma were causing much concern. In his correspondence, John Low makes scant mention of Afghanistan. Patrick Alexander Vans Agnew, the son of his old friend, joined the Bengal Civil Service early in the following year, and the greater part of his letter-book during the spring months is taken up by correspondence with the lad's father.

Memo. of letter to Col. Agnew, 14th Feb., 1841.

... Will write to his son, & to some friends about him—to Henry, & to Colvin. Send an interesting paper of latest news about Nepaul, Scinde, Burma & China.

¹ He was sent to India, where his women-folk were already in detention. Never during his captivity, or after his liberation, did he appear to harbour any resentment against the British.

Meanwhile he made arrangements for the lad, in whom he took a paternal interest, to "take up his abode" with John Colvin,¹ in Calcutta, but youth is proverbially impatient of leading strings, and Patrick had made his own plans with other young Writers, on the voyage out :

April 16th, 1841.

. . . I daresay Patrick himself may have written to you about his little arrangements, but if not, his letter to me will be interesting to you & Mrs. Agnew. As for his career after leaving college, upon the whole the political line is the best ; the field for service is so immensely extended since we crossed the Indus, that an Assistant with good talents *must* in such new countries get detached employment in a very few years that will bring him into notice.

I shall therefore continue to urge him to work hard at Persian & Hindooostanee, & I will write to Macnaghten & Clarke (who has charge of our relations with Lahore) & to Sutherland, to apply for him if they have any opportunity.

I will try Macnaghten first, because his is the widest field of all, & because I am on very intimate terms of friendship with him.

If all these fail, I feel quite confident that my friend Robertson, Governor of Agra, will at my request employ him in the Delhi or Saugor territories, where our revenue arrangements are more interesting & less hampered by rules & regulations than in the older provinces. . . .

Young Vans Agnew was appointed Assistant to the Commissioner of the Delhi Division in the following year. His career was a short one, and his tragic and heroic death, six years later, led directly to our annexation of the Punjab. It is, as Kipling says, another story, but it is one of the most moving episodes in British-Indian history, and I am tempted to record it briefly here.

Multan, the south-western division of the Pun-

¹ John Russel Colvin (1807-57), Private Secretary to Lord Auckland.

jab, had been conquered in 1818 by Ranjit Singh, who made over the administration of the province to one Sawan Mal. For six years after the death of the former, a condition of anarchy prevailed in his dominions, which led to the first Sikh War, at the termination of which, in 1845, a Council of Regency was instituted by the British at Lahore, to act during the minority of Ranjit's descendant, the young Maharajah Duleep Singh.

Three years later, Mulraj, Governor of Multan, son and successor of Sawan Mal, a very rich man who felt resentment at curtailment of his authority, gave notice at Lahore of his wish to resign. This decision the British authorities were reluctant to accept, pressing him more than once to reconsider the matter. He, however, persisted in his determination, and a successor, Sirdar Khan Sing, was therefore appointed, and sent, accompanied by two British officers, to take over the city of Multan.

The officers selected were Patrick Vans Agnew and Lieutenant W. A. Anderson of the Bombay Fusiliers.

Vans Agnew, then twenty-six years of age, was the oldest political officer on that frontier, and a young man of great ability and experience. Amongst his contemporaries he was conspicuous for his sympathetic understanding of the natives, and he was beloved of English and Indians alike.

His companion, a still younger man, was an unusually good Oriental scholar and was also distinguished for his conciliating manners.¹

¹ This account is mainly based on the detailed narrative given in Herbert Edwardes's *A Year in the Punjab* (Sir Herbert B. Edwardes, 1819-68, one of the great soldier-statesmen of India. He was at this time first Assistant to the Resident at Lahore).

The escort was a large one. It consisted of a Gurkha regiment (upwards of 600 men), a troop of Horse Artillery, and five or six hundred Cavalry. It was the hot season, and Khan Singh, accompanied by the two Englishmen, took the easiest route, by water—an unfortunate decision.

The magic of personality, that "*puissance des âmes sur des âmes*" which is the very root from which the British Empire has sprung, was wasted here. Had these two young officers marched from Lahore with the troops, sharing in their field sports and coming into daily friendly contact, it is probable that their fate would have been different.

It was in the morning of the 19th April, 1848, that Mulraj formally gave over charge of the Multan fort to Khan Singh and the two officers who rode beside him unarmed. They had received the keys, and leaving two companies of Gurkhas in possession, were retiring by the bridge, when Patrick Agnew was suddenly attacked by one of Mulraj's soldiers and unhorsed by his spear. Quickly jumping to his feet, he struck at his assailant with his riding-stick, but the latter, throwing away the spear, closed with his sword, inflicting two severe wounds. Mulraj, after a hasty glance, set spurs to his horse and galloped from the spot. It was left to Khan Singh, assisted by a brother-in-law of the ex-Governor, to lift Vans Agnew on to his own elephant, surrounded as they were by a hostile crowd, and return hastily to camp.

Anderson, meanwhile, had fared worse. Several of the followers of Mulraj turned back half-way and cut him down, leaving him for dead on the

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ground, where he was later found by some Gurkhas, who placed him on a litter and carried him into the Mahomedan building which served as their quarters. There the two friends, who a few hours earlier had ridden out, full of health and strength, came together. A native doctor (of the Gurkha Regiment) attended to their wounds. Lieutenant Anderson was unable to move from the bed on which they had laid him. It was a sad meeting.

By 11 a.m. Vans Agnew, who throughout behaved with the greatest coolness and courage, had sent a report to the Resident at Lahore,¹ and written a letter to Mulraj, generously disclaiming any belief as to his possible complicity in the affair, but asking for an immediate interview and calling upon him to seize and punish the offenders.

To the Resident, after reporting on the events of the morning, he made request for a surgeon, making light of his own wounds :

... a smart gash in the left shoulder and another in the same arm. Anderson is worst off, poor fellow. He has a severe wound on the thigh, another on the shoulder, one on the back of the neck and one in the face. I think it most necessary that a doctor should be sent down, though I hope not to need him myself.

By 2 p.m. the situation was much worse, and he wrote to Herbert Edwardes for assistance, a letter alas ! which did not reach its destination until three days later.² He asked for a regiment to be sent.

¹ Sir Frederick Currie.

² Edwardes at the time was some eighty miles to the north-west of Multan, at Dera Fateh Khan.

PATRICK VANS AGNEW

... Pray let it march instantly or, if gone, hasten it to top-speed. If you can spare another, pray send it also. I am responsible for the measure. I am cut up a little and on my back. Lieutenant Anderson is much worse. . . . I don't think Moolraj has anything to do with it. I was riding with him when we were attacked. He rode off, but is now said to be in the hands of the soldiery. Khan Singh and his people all right.

Yours in haste,

P. A. VANS AGNEW.

19th, Two p.m.

To General Cortlandt¹ or

Lieutenant Edwardes, Bunnoo.

. Two hours after the dispatch of this letter a messenger from Mulraj arrived. He sent to say that :

He could neither give up the guilty nor come himself . . . that all the garrison, Hindu and Mahomedan, were in rebellion, and the British officers had better see to their own safety.

That Mulraj was implicated in the *original* attack is unlikely ; he was a proved coward, but from this moment he nailed his colours to the mast, allowing himself to be persuaded to head a rebellion which embraced the whole armed population of the fort and city.

That evening all the transport animals—camels, bullocks and elephants—out at graze, were carried off. Withdrawal was impossible. During the night Patrick Agnew mounted his six guns and called all his men and camp followers within the walls, but when morning broke and hostile fire opened from the fort, the Lahore artillerymen

¹ General Cortlandt, according to the custom of the time, was under the direction of Herbert Edwardes, as a "political," although the latter only held at the time the rank of Lieutenant.

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refused to serve their guns. Mulraj's next move was to send emissaries offering large bribes to the troops of the Escort, who went over to the enemy *en masse*, Horse, Foot and Artillery.

The end was near. One last message was sent to Mulraj in the course of the day, asking for peace, and it was subsequently said that in a conference held by him and his supporters "it was agreed upon that the officers were to quit the country and that the attack upon them was to cease." It was too late. As twilight fell, an indistinct murmur, gathering in volume, reached the ears of the little group clustered beneath the dome of the now deserted building. The closing scene was afterwards described to fellow-countrymen by native witnesses.

Patrick Vans Agnew sat on the bed, holding Anderson's hand, and talking to him from time to time in English. With them were Khan Singh, some ten faithful Horsemen, the Moonshees (clerks) of their office and their personal servants. As the rabble neared, howling like a pack of wolves after their prey, the Khan asked permission to wave a white sheet and ask for mercy. Agnew replied :

The time for mercy has gone, let none be asked for. They can kill us two if they like, but we are not the last of the English ; thousands of Englishmen will come down here when we are gone, and annihilate Mulraj and his soldiers and his fort.

The multitude surged in, and the Khan begged for and obtained quarter ; the lives of the other natives were spared—they were out for other quarry. Agnew was attacked by a Sikh ruffian

of the most repulsive aspect, and decapitated by the third stroke of his sword, while his companion was hacked to death.

The bodies were dragged outside and submitted to every kind of indignity, and later on Agnew's servants, peeping from hiding-places in the city, saw with grief their late master's horse ridden by his assassin through the streets.

This man was well rewarded by Mulraj, who sat in durbar on the following day, with his rival as prisoner beside him, and when Vans Agnew's head was brought in and thrown with a bitter taunt into the latter's lap, the Khan burst into tears.

Ten months later, Patrick Agnew's prophetic words were fulfilled to the letter, and his body and that of his companion were reverently exhumed from the careless grave into which they had been thrust, and borne by men of the 1st Bombay Fusiliers (Anderson's regiment) through the breach made by British guns to a final resting-place on the summit of Mulraj's citadel.

The latter, craven to the last, and indifferent to the fate of his followers, surrendered, imploring for his life.

He was tried at Lahore,¹ and condemned to be hanged, but recommended to mercy as "the victim of circumstances." An upheaval of the

¹ Herbert Edwardes, with whom the memory of his murdered countryman was ever present, and who had been continuously in the field since Agnew's last call for help had reached him, was astonished to learn that the prisoner had applied for him to defend him at the trial. He had previously been asked to prosecute, but refused to do either.

"I believed him guilty, & would not defend him, but I had hunted him with an army in the field, & had no wish to follow him into the dock."

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entire country had resulted from his initial rebellion, and the fall of Multan on January 2nd, 1849, and the ensuing victories of Chillianwalla and Gujrat, were followed by the annexation of the Punjab on the 2nd of April of that year.

CHAPTER XII

*Afghanistan ; the Massacre ; re-occupation of Kabul, and
Return of the Victorious Armies, 1841-42*

AFTER thus trespassing into the realm of the future, John Low's letter-book recalls us to the year 1841, when Patrick Vans Agnew was still a young lad "swatting" at languages at the Company's College of Fort William. There remain only two or three further entries; all records of family chit-chat come to an abrupt termination in August, and any information of S. E. Low's closing days and of her son's return to Scotland, is only to be gleaned from other scattered sources.

Early in this year Georgina had gone to Edinburgh for a serious operation, and her mother's second gentle and frail sister passed away at her home—3, South Castle Street, leaving her money to her relations in precisely a similar manner to Maria Fettes. One of the last-recorded letters sent from Lucknow was written to Maria Bethune, who had taken charge at Clatto, to "express Augusta's and my grief at poor Georgina's sufferings, and our anxious hope that the next mail may bring an account of her safe return." During several months thus spent in Edinburgh, the latter came increasingly under the influence of her masterful sister. Susan was not only a follower, but a personal friend of the great and scholarly

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Thomas Chalmers,¹ but the views held by the ministers of her immediate entourage were of a narrower type. It is to the Cairnie tutor's *Sketch of the late Lady Foulis* that I am indebted for one or two glimpses of the Clatto circle at this time, but his continuous eulogy of the subject of his Memoir leaves little space for other persons or events :

Lady Foulis' tender concern for her sister, who was called upon to undergo a painful operation, induced her to ask for Mr. Hewitson to minister to her in her afflictions.

and a month or two later Georgina is reported as :

regaining her strength of body, although for long it was so very slow that it was hardly perceptible, & she is likewise getting back the use of her right arm.

This short sketch of Susan's character and activities is interesting as being typical of the phase through which the "unco guid" were then passing in Scotland, although both in her virtues and limitations she must have been an extreme example.²

The account of the management of her household staff fills the hearts of a degenerate and

¹ Thomas Chalmers, D.D. (1780-1847). This great Scottish divine was a native of Fife. In 1834 he became the leader of the evangelical section of the Church in the General Assembly, and in 1841 headed the movement which resisted the continuation of the law of Patronage, becoming Moderator of the new Free Church of Scotland after the separation in 1843.

² In England those of the Evangelical school were passing through much the same phase, but in the 'dourer' North, a sterner spirit prevailed; moreover, the clergymen of the Church of England never possessed the despotic power often wielded by Ministers both of the Established and the new Free Churches in the era which was now setting in.

impotent generation with awe, not untinctured with envy !

Next to her own children, her servants received from her that motherly care and kind consideration which to many have made her memory blessed. She gave to each a Bible, and Bogatzky's *Golden Treasury*, inscribed with the place and date. On New Year's Day she presented each of them with a book—the same book to all.

She was the first to waken in the morning and always rang the servants up. She usually rose at six, and spent the first hours in her own room. Her servants remained long with her—many until they married or were superannuated. While lenient in spirit, she was at the same time strict in discipline and faithful in reproof.

On Term-day she insisted on their putting a portion of their wages into the saving's bank, and kept their pass-books like a watch-dog, so that they were frightened to ask for it and withdraw anything.

But Jenny, the hen-wife, might surely have been left unharassed :

Old Jenny Kinniemont was hen-wife at Cairnie in 1830, and was then about 70 years of age. She had always been a respectable woman, a faithful servant, and most regular in her attendance upon religious ordinance. But she was a stranger to vital goodness. With all her morality and strict formalism, she was spiritually blind and dead. There were "nae borns-again" in her young days, she said. I occasionally visited her in her cottage, gave her a tract or prayed with her, and tried to speak a word about the state of her soul, which was no easy matter.

She had a spice of humour in her composition [the narrator certainly has none!] and in her more vigorous days was always ready to act the peace maker. When two of the men-servant's wives were one day squabbling near her door, she went in behind them and flapping her apron, as if at a hen, first to the one and then to the other, she said : "Shoo ! lassie, awa' hame baith of ye."

She found great pleasure in treating the children who came about to bread and treacle or some such dainty, and

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when her mistress proposed to order her bread along with the house supply, she objected, saying : " Na, na, Mem, for if I dinna buy my ain bread I cudna gie the bit bairnies their piece."

One regrets to learn that Jennie, in her old age, yielded to *force majeure*, and underwent the prescribed conversion.

She owed her knowledge of the truth to another, to Lady Foulis, who visited her frequently, lent her books, and spoke to her faithfully and kindly concerning her spiritual interests.

With her sons Susan Foulis was inexorable ; they were fond of and proud of their mother, and their training and upbringing were admirable but for the fact that they were denied any degree of personal liberty. Yet she herself had been brought up by a wise mother, whose discipline, although sufficiently strict, respected the individualities of her children.

Their father was frequently absent from home, and never interfered with her plans, but confided the boys entirely to her management. He avoided saying or doing anything that might weaken her authority ; there was no appeal from her.

An early episode, narrated by the tutor with his usual undeviating admiration, would suggest, to a gentler mother, a very different moral.

Walking in India with one of her boys, when three or four years old, he took a stubborn fit and would not follow her. After some attempt at persuasion, she told him that if he did not obey, she would walk on and leave him, and she did so. After turning a corner, she waited a minute or two and then went back for him. But imagine her horror to see at no great distance a tiger [in all probability a leopard] making towards the child. This story

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she used to relate in order to enforce prompt obedience, and show the sin and danger of wilfulness.

In a time when no free education was provided and charitable institutions were few and far between, she entered the philanthropic field in full vigour.

In 1838 an itinerant dancing master applied to an old inhabitant of the little village of Foodieash [near Cairnie Lodge] for the use of an empty room, in order to pursue his vocation there. This proposal appeared to Lady Foulis to be fraught with danger to the minds and morals of the young people whom she had been instructing in Sabbath classes. The owner of the room was persuaded to refuse it for such a purpose, and the idea suggested itself that to establish a sewing school for the girls of the place would effectually preclude all such attempts in future. No time was lost, soon the place was filled with a crowd of eager learners.

Later on a larger school-house was built, on the promise of Lady Foulis to pay the rent for at least five years.

While the ordinary elements of a useful education were imparted, the characteristic of the school was Bible teaching and training. The school fee was low, for a long time the books and stationery were provided gratis. Parents pinched themselves to secure an education which contributed so largely to the present happiness as well as the future good of their children.

It was indeed a time of bitter grinding poverty for many a home in Scotland, and many a family, unknown to the outside world, lived on the verge of starvation, uncomplainingly endured.¹

In 1832, Susan Foulis had become a member of

¹ Dorothy Wordsworth's account of her tour in Scotland, undertaken in 1822, gives an appalling picture of the conditions she witnessed, but of course the poverty was far more stark in the Highlands than in the agricultural counties.

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a Society, having for object the relief of women above sixty years of age.

In her weekly rounds, one day, she knocked on a wrong door, and on being invited in, found an old man and his wife literally in a state of starvation. From that time the old couple were regularly supported. Every morning there was made up a basket of scraps which one of her boys carried on his way to school.

But with her, generosity was always tempered with austerity :

As the winter approached no small amount of thought was exercised in providing proper *haps* for the aged poor. And as true kindness does not disdain to be minute, precise instructions were given as to the clothing ; the flannel shifts were to be soft, but coarse, the flannel petticoats to be good, but thick and blue, the wrappers of coarse cloth to be striped or grey, etc.

In the autumn of 1841 Georgina was able to return to Clatto, and the last memo. in John Low's book is of a letter written to inform her that Augusta was expecting another baby at Christmas-time, but that they fully intended to sail for home early in the following year.

All was well in Oudh at this time, but towards the end of the year disquieting news was beginning to reach India from Afghanistan. The maintenance of Shah Shuja on the throne was costing the Indian Treasury at least a million and a quarter a year, and unfortunately the policy of continued occupation, *coupled with retrenchment*, was decided on, and the tribes, shorn of their accustomed subsidies, from half-hearted allies, developed into whole-hearted foes.

Sir William Macnaghten, who was expecting soon to depart for India and take up his new appointment as Governor of Madras—sanguine as

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ever, seized at any chance of postponing an evacuation which had become inevitable.

The command of the forces had devolved upon General Elphinstone,¹ an old and distinguished soldier, but who at this stage of his career was bodily unfit for any active command. Responsibility was divided between the military and political elements, the two men could not pull together, and divided counsels with disastrous results were the order of the day.

Whether Aleck Deas sent any account of these last fateful months to the Lucknow Residency, that for years had been a home to him, is not known. His colonel,² who, although possessed of great personal courage, was so unpopular that his men could not be depended on to follow him, fell in action on November 23rd; the regiment had been engaged in several unsuccessful sorties, and Aleck himself left Kabul a wounded man.

The end came soon after Macnaghten's murder on December 23rd. Another disturbing factor had been added to the situation by the arrival of Dost Mahommed's favourite son, Akbar Khan, and the Envoy, in allowing himself to be persuaded to ride out and meet him in conference, acted in disregard of the grave warning of the General and others.

The intention undoubtedly was to kidnap—not to kill him,³ but he put up a brave, but futile resistance, and was shot with the very pair of pistols which he had presented to Akbar a day

¹ General William George Keith Elphinstone, an officer who had greatly distinguished himself at Waterloo.

² Lieut.-Colonel Oliver.

³ Shah Shuja did not long survive him. After deciding to quit Kabul with the retreating force, he changed his mind, and was likewise murdered in Kabul on April 5th, 1842.

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or two before. The surrounding Afghans rushed in and finished the work with their knives, and he was last seen by one of the staff officers who accompanied him, struggling violently, with an expression of horrified amazement on his face. These three officers were likewise seized and dragged away. Two of them reached the enemy camp alive, the third, slipping from the horse on which he was mounted behind his captor, was instantly cut to pieces.¹

There remained the signing of the most humiliating treaty in British history : in return for the promise of a safe conduct for the Army to Peshawar, huge payments of money were made ; not only Kabul, but Kandahar, Ghazni and Jalalabad were to be evacuated, and worst of all, with the exception of six field-pieces, all the guns surrendered to a most treacherous foe.²

On January the 6th, 4,500 fighting men and over 12,000 camp-followers streamed out of Kabul. The British element, which comprised the 44th Regiment, one troop of Horse Artillery and officers of the various native regiments, numbered roughly 700.

Aleck Deas's regiment, the 5th Native Infantry,³ marched with the main column in charge of the baggage ; the 37th were with them, guarding the treasure. The details of the tragic story are well known. There was no organization in that vast

¹ The two survivors were Captains Colin Mackenzie and George St. P. Lawrence.

² General Nott, at Kandahar, as well as Sale at Jalalabad, disregarded this order sent by Elphinstone in accordance with the Treaty, holding that he could not have been a free agent at the time.

³ The strength of the regiment on leaving Kabul was about 700.

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struggling mass, little food and no shelter. The unwieldy train of camp-followers, panic-stricken, hampered the fighting men at every turn. The ground was one unbroken sheet of glittering snow, and from the very first day the sepoys, accustomed to the hot plains of India, died in hundreds from exposure. On the morning of the 8th, Akbar Khan, hovering ever on their flanks in the rôle of friendly intermediary, demanded hostages as security for the stipulated evacuation of Jalalabad, and Major Pottinger and Captains Lawrence and Mackenzie passed into his hands. Owing to Elphinstone's fatal vacillation, the army had only covered ten miles in two days. They had arrived at the opening of the Khurd-Kabul Pass. Armed men and non-combatants were alike helpless throughout the ghastly journey, but the slaughter which took place on that day exceeded all others in horror.

Down the narrow defile, five miles in length, shut in by stupendous hills, to which in the winter months no ray of sunlight could penetrate, rushed a mountain torrent, its edges slippery with ice and congealed snow, which had to be crossed eight-and-twenty times by men and baggage animals, while, as the pass narrowed, a murderous fire was poured down by hostile tribes from the precipitous hillsides. Three thousand men perished during the passage ; the wounded, who had perforce to be abandoned, froze to death, or met a swifter end through Afghan knives.

Mounted on horseback, or in camel-panniers, a small number of English women and children, which included Lady Sale and the widowed Lady Macnaghten, had accompanied the retreat. Except for a wound in the arm sustained by the

former, the little party rode unscathed through the hail of bullets. Two children were, however, lost in the confusion.¹ Towards noon, on January the 9th, an offer made by Akbar Khan to take the ladies and children under his protection, one day's march in rear of the army, was accepted. The proposal was agreed to under his solemn promise eventually to escort all their number safely to Jalalabad. It was arranged that their husbands should keep them company. In this manner, although destiny had in store for them many months of miserable captivity, they escaped certain death.

It was on the following day that Aleck Deas fell. By the evening of the 10th, few efficient fighting men survived. Earlier in the day the remainder of the Bengal Infantry had been annihilated. Trapped in a narrow gorge, the wretched sepoys, with hands too frostbitten to hold their muskets, much less to pull the trigger, threw away their arms and bolted. But escape was impossible, and the Afghans, swooping down, killed them to a man, seizing all that was left of the baggage and treasure. With him, in this gorge, fell four brother officers, including the C.O., Major Swayne, who had assumed the command on the death of the Colonel in Kabul. He, too, had left the city, crippled by a previous wound. By this time twelve thousand soldiers and camp-followers had fallen. The survivors were nearly all of British birth ; they had withstood the cold far better than their Indian comrades, but from the continuous fire of the two

¹ One of these, the daughter of a Captain Anderson, was eventually recovered in Kabul, where she had been well cared for in the household of a friendly Afghan chief.

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ensuing days few of these escaped. On the 11th, General Elphinstone and Brigadier Shelton were summoned to a conference by Akbar Khan and forcibly detained. The survivors of the 44th Regiment,¹ which under Shelton's leadership had made more than one gallant stand, witnessed his departure with despair, and after the crossing of the Jugdulluck Pass on the 12th, made more terrible by the double barricade of branches of the prickly holly-oak, with which the mouth had been closed, the remnant of the Kabul Army, as a fighting force, ceased to exist. On the 13th, a few mounted officers, who had been in advance of the main column, decided to push on for Jalalabad, which was still held by General Sale. Elphinstone's order to evacuate that city did not reach his hands till January the 9th, by which time he was in possession of ample proof of Akbar Khan's treachery. To the very end the tragedy continued without relief. Six officers only reached Fatehabad, and famished as they were, made a fatal halt, while bread was brought up to them by some peasants. Two of them lost their lives on the spot, and three were overtaken and killed on the road, within four miles of Sale's garrison. The ramparts of Jalalabad were resounding to the noise of men toiling with axe and shovel, when a sentry, facing the Kabul road, saw advancing a solitary horseman, evidently wounded and in the last stage of exhaustion. It was Doctor Brydon, the last survivor of the force.²

In one of those strange and rare gleams of

¹ Now the Essex Regiment.

² In addition to hostages, a small number of officers and men had their lives spared, and passed into captivity.

prescience, which some men and women at times experience, that old and gallant soldier, Colonel Dennie, had predicted that one man only would escape and would arrive to tell the tale. "The voice of Dennie," said one of those present, "sounded like the response of an oracle, when he exclaimed, 'Did I not say so? Here comes the messenger.'"¹

The news of the disaster (which reached Calcutta on January 30th) was received in India with consternation. Lord Auckland, who had been superseded, and whose successor was on his way out, appears to have collapsed under the shock, and the Commander-in-Chief and the Generals on the frontier received from him only vague and contradictory orders. It was said that he spent hours of misery in pacing the verandahs of Government House in the company of his devoted sisters. To John Low a personal grief was added to the general feeling of horror. His nephew, like many who through life follow the path of least resistance, was possessed of some lovable qualities, and had been to him an object of affectionate solicitude for many years.

A month or two earlier he and his wife had come to Calcutta (where, in December, their fourth son² was born) with the intention of embarking for home early in the New Year, but an unexpected misfortune—the failure of the

¹ The Rev. G. R. Gleig, author of *With Sale's Brigade in Afghanistan*. (Dennie himself fell three months later fighting against Akbar Khan.)

² Irvine Low (1841-81), Major Bengal Cavalry. Married Harriet, daughter of Sir Wm. Liston-Foulis, Bart., of Woodhall and Milburn Tower. Died of dysentery while acting as Deputy-Commissioner in Oudh.

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financial firm of Cantor & Co., in which he had placed a considerable sum of money (specially put aside for his children's education)—had caused him to ask Lord Auckland's permission to cancel his resignation,¹ and he and his brother-in-law returned to Lucknow before the child's birth.

Unfortunately Henry Low, of whose activities, since the cessation of the Clatto correspondence, there is no record, had become a partner in this firm,² and consequently was, for the second time, adjudged a bankrupt. Such failures were at this time common, and whether he was a sufferer from his own imprudence, or as is more probable on this occasion, a victim of circumstances, is not known, but there is little doubt that his brother felt called upon to help him to another start in life. Shortly before Augusta—accompanied once more by her youngest sister—started to rejoin her husband, Richmond Shakespear arrived from England, thirsting to be again employed on active service, a wish that was soon gratified, for on the 3rd January, he heard that he was to go to Pesha-war, the Government appointing :

Lieutenant Sir R. C. Shakespear to hold the office of Secretary to Maj.-General Pollock, & we trust that the talents of this officer, by which his late services in Central Asia have been distinguished, will prove of much advantage to the Major-General in the field of operations now open to him.

¹ Colonel W. Sleeman, appointed successor to John Low, on hearing of the circumstances, expressed his desire that the latter should retain the post. (Sleeman became Resident at Lucknow, 1849-56.)

² After 1842 the name of the firm ceases to appear in the Indian Registers. The names of the partners are given as C. A. Cantor, H. M. Low, and W. Westerman.

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During the fortnight which he spent at the Irvines' house, he became much devoted to Selina, and although brother and sister never met again, their friendship was cemented by a constant and intimate correspondence.

On reaching Lucknow, Augusta found that the old King was nearing his end, but on their arrival Selina records that he sent a gift to greet them—for little Irvine, the new baby :

Such a dear little *wee* elephant. It had silver rings as anklets, & would put up its little trunk with an odd kind of noise.

Shortly before Muhammed Ali's death, a Russian visitor arrived in Lucknow, and some of the impressions, which he committed to paper, are given in *Bygone Days in India*.¹ The description of the Resident's howdah is rather amusing :

Prince Alexis Soltykoff . . . made no attempt to see the old & enfeebled King, but gives a description of Colonel Low, the Resident, whom he considered, did not look at all like an Englishman, but had much more the air of an amiable Frenchman (*sic*).

Low spoke French admirably, to the delight of Soltykoff ; knowledge of French at that time being possessed by very few Englishmen in India. He lived in great state. The howdah of his elephant was a wonderful affair, shaped like a pair of swans, cut in silver gilt, set off by imitation diamonds, rubies & emeralds, which hung loosely on it, & jingled as the great animal moved.

There must have been genuine grief at the Residency at Muhammed Ali's death ; never before had the relations between the Court and the Residency been on so warm and friendly a footing. It now fell to John Low's lot for the second time to assist at placing a King of Oudh upon the "gaddi."

¹ Chapter XVII, p. 205.

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Amjad Ali Shah was a far less worthy man than his father, and the evil manner in which he allowed his heir to be reared brought about the eventual loss of the kingdom to his line, but he himself, from the first, was most desirous of being on good terms with the Paramount Power, and shortly after his accession John Low, at his request, put him into direct communication with the new Governor-General.

Lord Ellenborough's¹ reply to this letter has been preserved :

May 20th, 1842.

SIR,

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ult., informing me that the King of Oude was desirous of holding direct correspondence with me, & that his Majesty was restrained from addressing me at present by the etiquette which requires that before he addresses me personally, His Majesty's titles should be confirmed by the British Government.

Being desirous of showing my readiness to gratify the King of Oude, & my consideration for his Majesty's rank, I have directed the Secretary of the Government to transmit my ratification of the titles (which I am informed that his Majesty wishes to assume) by express to-day, without waiting for the ordinary dâk.

It will afford me much pleasure to enter into personal communication with his Majesty.

Believe me,

My dear Sir,

Very faithfully Yours,

ELLENBOROUGH.

¹ Edward Law, first Earl of Ellenborough (1790-1871), Governor-General 1842-4. Four times President of the Board of Control. Although twice married, like his two immediate predecessors, he had come out to India as a single man, having obtained a divorce by Act of Parliament from his second wife, Jane Digby—the beautiful and notorious " Ianthe."

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A description¹ of the new King's personal appearance has been given by a later foreign visitor to Lucknow—one Von Orlich :

... He is a tall corpulent man, with a good-natured, but very ugly countenance, which is disfigured by a nose of extraordinary size. A green choga, embroidered with gold & silver, fell from his shoulders to his ankles ; red silk pantaloons, & shoes embroidered with gold, the points turned up, completed his dress.

He wore a high cap, like a tiara, covered with jewels, several strings of large, handsome pearls hung round his neck, & two costly diamond rings on his fingers.

His mode of life & the bias of his inclinations were painfully impressed on his languid countenance.

His Majesty had four wives, nearly two hundred concubines, & a great number of children. . . .

Effeminate, weak, & without character, the King loves neither the dangers & fatigues of the chase, nor the privations of a military life.

Travelling post-haste, it was over a month before Richmond Shakespear could reach General Pollock² at Peshawar. On arrival at Ferozepore he purchased three riding camels, on the foremost of which he was seated :

Having my bedding on the saddle behind me, & my rifle & double-barrelled pistol in front, the six-barrelled pistol & poor William's sabre round my waist.

His "chuprassie" had behind him two portmanteaux and carried a double-barrelled gun and pistol, and the camel-man on the third animal was in charge of the cooking utensils, etc.

On the 12th of February his old friend, Henry

¹ *Bygone Days in India*, p. 207.

² General Sir George Pollock (1786-1872), an officer of the Company's service, who had already served for forty years in India.

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Lawrence,¹ also on Pollock's staff, sent a messenger with a horse to meet him, and joyfully abandoning the detested camel, he rode into the former's camp. It was impossible for the time being to march to the relief of Sale's garrison ; there was much sickness in camp, and disaffection amongst the sepoys, which had greatly increased since the repulse of Wild's brigade in the Khyber Pass in the preceding month.² Pollock was too experienced a soldier to court a second failure, but by his practical care for his men and the infusion of his own spirit of confidence and courage, the troops were fit and eager for the fray when they finally left Peshawar. Richmond was throughout on excellent terms with his Chief, of whom, when failing to gain his point in a difference of opinion, he wrote to his youngest sister :

But his under jaw projects over the upper jaw, & I don't know whether you have observed, my little Selinthus, that all such persons are obstinate.

On March 30th, he wrote jubilantly to Marianne Irvine :

Packing up ! Hurrah for the Khyber ! You can't think how delighted I am to get away from a desk to which I have been nailed for the last six weeks.

The Pass was forced with little loss, and on April 16th the band of the 13th Foot (now the Somerset Light Infantry) played the relieving army into

¹ Captain (afterwards Sir Henry Lawrence)—(1806-57), of whom more below.

² Of this crisis Kaye & Malleson write :—“ Perhaps we do not know even now how great was the danger. But the sound discretion and excellent tact of Pollock, aided by the energies of Henry Lawrence and Richmond Shakespear, brought the sepoys to a better temper.”

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Jalalabad to the old Jacobite air—" Oh ! but ye've been lang o' coming."

From Peshawar, communication with Sale's garrison had not proved difficult, but as dispatches were as likely as not to fall into Afghan hands, they were usually written in French. Another method, which was particularly useful in communicating with British hostages, afforded some comic relief, as the letters were frequently handed to enemy emissaries for delivery. This was to give required information, penned in rice water, between lines dealing with entirely trivial matters.¹

In 1928, Richmond's youngest son came across two blank sheets in a bundle of letters addressed by his father to his sister, Selina. In her writing, on the outside cover, stood the word " invisible," and on the application of iodine and water, lines and verses written eighty-six years before sprang suddenly into view.

CAMP, JELALABAD, 31st May, 1842.

MY DEAREST SELINTHUS, Your dear kind letter of the 14th instant reached me to-day. You have all [some words remained invisible], but I cannot without compromising my dignity write to you, and I have hit upon the expedient of writing in invisible ink, to save my " Purdah," as the Persians say. Ah ! You people of Lucknow, who live at home at ease, little know what it is to receive a letter from those in whom you take an interest. Believe me, my dear little darling Selinthus, your letter has given me the greatest pleasure.

He had received, while on his journey to Peshawar, a braided hair chain made from her own tresses, and on getting his thanks, expressed in verse, she

¹ By this method, Akbar Khan himself was occasionally used as a medium of communication between Nott and Pollock.

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had written begging for copies of his earlier efforts to include in her collection ; in compliance with which request, he advised her to apply to "old Jonathan" for his ode on the occasion of the death of the King of Oudh, "which he assured her was of a very high order."

The garrison of Jalalabad was in fine fettle on the arrival of Pollock, for nine days before they had made a successful attack on Akbar Khan's camp, capturing his guns, ammunition and provisions, and putting the Afghan chief to flight.

In India the new Governor-General was at the helm. His arrival in Calcutta had been hailed with joy. The ignominy of the Kabul capitulation was even more deeply deplored than the horrors of the ensuing retreat. The prestige of the British Raj had been rudely shaken.

Lord Ellenborough, as former President of the Board of Control, was welcomed as a ruler with a profound knowledge of Indian affairs ; he soon proved himself to be a man of fiery and impetuous energy, and his declaration of the 15th March, circulated among all the chief political agents, avowing his intention of re-establishing British military credit in Afghanistan before the ultimate evacuation of the country, stimulated the confidence which his personality had evoked. What then was the general consternation when his subsequent conduct proved as vacillating as that of his predecessor ! Pollock and Sale at Jalalabad, and General Nott, in command at Kandahar,¹

¹ General Sir William Nott (1782-1842). An officer of the Bengal Army. Appointed to command the troops in Quetta and Kandahar in 1839. He had refused to evacuate Kandahar on receiving Elphinstone's order, holding that it had been given under duress.

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were alike inspired with the burning wish to advance to Kabul and avenge in some measure the massacre of the retreat. The Governor-General, however, although not averse to striking a decisive blow in Afghanistan, shirked the assumption of responsibility for further operations involving risk, and a certain further depletion of an exhausted treasury.

On the 19th April he instructed Nott to evacuate Kandahar and fall back on Quetta, at the same time leaving the decision for the disposal of Pollock's force to the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Jasper Nicholls, and the latter, who from the first had viewed the occupation with extreme disfavour, ordered the troops in Jalalabad to retire to Peshawar.

On the 31st May Richmond wrote despairingly to Marianne Irvine :

The Government has ordered us back, but a remonstrance has been sent in which will, I trust, save us from this disgrace, for surely it would be nothing else were we to quit this country, leaving the prisoners without an effort. The Governor-General appears very arbitrary ; I wish he would order me back to my regiment, for really I don't see how anyone is to gain honour by serving such a Government.

Throughout the campaign he was in constant correspondence with Mr. Maddock, who held Macnaghten's former appointment as Political Secretary to the Governor-General, the expression of whose feelings on the subject of the orders he was obliged to transmit amounted very nearly to an incitement to ignore them. On the 7th April, Richmond had received a letter from him saying : " I dread the effect of a retrograde movement

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from that place,"¹ and, in a later passage, after saying that the country would owe General Pollock a debt of gratitude if he retrieved the position in Afghanistan, he continues : " If he cannot, our affairs in India must be jeopardized by our unfortunate connection, and our ignominious retirement from it. If we could only recover Kabul and hold it for a month, the Indian world would be satisfied that our Empire is not yet on the wane." Nott, meanwhile, who did not receive Lord Ellenborough's letter of the 19th April until the middle of May, had announced to Pollock his intention of marching without delay upon Kabul. In the words of Major Rawlinson, the Political Agent at Kandahar, the order to retreat burst upon him like a thunder-clap. Both he and Pollock could only urge upon the Government the insuperable difficulties of retirement until the hot weather should be over. These representations carried weight with the Governor-General, who on April 28th had sent an extraordinary letter to Pollock, giving further directions for retirement *in the event of his already having advanced and occupied Kabul.* In his reply to this letter, on May 13th, the General brought forward another cogent reason against immediate withdrawal, which Lord Ellenborough had apparently entirely overlooked.

It is true that the garrison of Jalalabad has been saved, but the relief of that garrison is only one object ; there still remain others which we cannot disregard—I allude to the release of the prisoners.

On June 1st, the Governor-General wrote again, acknowledging the impossibility of a retreat until

¹ Jalalabad.

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the month of October, and expressing a hope that before that time a decisive blow would have been struck at the enemy. This letter was received at Jalalabad with unfeigned relief : Pollock was not the man to shirk the responsibility thus shifted to his shoulders, and Richmond at once expressed his feelings to Selina :

You would have been amused to see the change it caused in all the faces in camp. An hour before everybody was crushed by the disreputable retreat which appeared to be inevitable, but now all are gay “ nods and winks and wreathed smiles.” Let us hope that the cloud which has so long hung over us is now removed.

Until the middle of August, however, there remained a wearing uncertainty as to Nott’s intentions, for although Pollock was the senior General, he had not been placed in supreme command, and on the 12th August Richmond wrote to Mr. Maddock :

If General Nott persists in carrying out his plan of retrograding, the game is up. It is dreadful the suspense until we know how he has decided.

Three days later that suspense was at an end :

MY DEAREST AND GENTLEST SELINA, with a heart overflowing with joy I sit down to write to you that we have just heard that General Nott has decided on advancing on Kabul, and we of course move up to support him. How old Jonathan will exult at this chance of retrieving our lost fame. Augusta too, and Low—it is a national source of enjoyment. Maiden, be I remembered in thy prayers.

The decisive letter to Nott had not been written until July 4th, over a month later than the one sent to Pollock ; it repeated the orders to retreat,

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but, most surprisingly, as a glance at the map will prove, gave permission for it to be carried out *via Ghazni, Kabul and Jalalabad!*

On the 20th August, Pollock's army was ready for the advance, in which General (now Sir Robert) Sale's division took part. To the Army generally the latter was now jocularly known as "the illustrious Garrison," having been so designated in a proclamation issued by Lord Ellenborough after the successful sortie of April 7th. For the other divisions which took part in the campaign, neither then nor at any other time did he show any appreciation.

Day by day, and step by step, the troops retraced the paths of those mountainous defiles which had been the scene of so much helpless agony. In the same passes, clustering on the same heights, the fierce Afghans rallied again to dispute their passage, but with an army, confident in its commander and with its feelings fanned to flame by encountering the dreadful traces of the past, the tribesmen had more than met their match.

The first fighting took place in the neighbourhood of Gundamuck on the 24th of the month, when, after some smart skirmishing, some forts and villages were taken. On the 8th September the first division encountered the Ghilzais in force on the hills commanding the Jugdulluck Pass, but the charge of British Infantry, shouting as they stormed the hills, struck terror into the hearts of the enemy, and they did not wait to meet the bayonet.

In one of the letters written by Richmond Shakespear at this time, he says :

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Near Jugdulluck.—There it was that General Elphinstone went to the interview with Mahomed Akbar from which he was never allowed to return. The poor soldiers were fired into from an adjoining height for many hours of the night. Some twenty of the 44th at last rushed out and drove away the Afghans, but they could not remain out from want of firewood and the excessive cold, and directly they returned, the firing from the enemy recommenced. . . .

And again :

We came on the barrier where so many hundreds of our comrades fell during the retreat ; their skeletons strew the road in great numbers. . . . All our troops were in no humour to shew any mercy. . . .

Akbar Khan was at this time in camp a few miles from Kabul, and true to his word, on receiving news of the approaching army, he had dispatched the British captives to the Hindu-Kush, from whence, should affairs go ill with him, they were to be sent to Turkistan and sold as slaves.

On the 12th, Pollock called a halt in the valley of Tezin, and on the following day Akbar sallied forth to give battle. It was in this valley that the issue was decided, and Richmond, describing the sights which met the eyes of the advancing troops, added : “ They have driven our men nearly frantic.”

A detailed description has been given by another officer of the force—a Lieutenant Greenwood of the 31st—of the passage through the Khurd-Kabul Pass :

The other passes are as nothing in comparison with this almost impregnable defile. The dead of Gen. Elphinstone’s army lay in heaps ; in some places they seemed to be mowed down in whole battalions. Although eight

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months had elapsed, they had been preserved in the snow, & their ghastly faces seemed to call upon us for revenge.

The mute appeal was not in vain. British bayonets were matched against Afghan knives as height after height was carried. The sepoys, too, and the Ghurka regiments fought with the utmost gallantry, and before evening fell two guns and three standards were captured and the enemy dispersed, but Akbar Khan had fled beyond reach. On the 15th September the army encamped on the Kabul race-course, having arrived two days in advance of Nott's division. They found the city in the hands of the Kuzzilbash tribe, who were well disposed towards the British and had already sent a message to Pollock's camp offering to detach a party of their Horse to recover the prisoners, who were at Bamian under the charge of Akbar's father-in-law, one Mahommed Shah Khan.

Richmond recounts the sequel to this offer, his part in which was no doubt influenced by previous experience :

The day before we arrived, I begged & prayed the General to let me go on & see what could be done to send off the Kuzzilbash horsemen. When he found that he could not answer my arguments, he gave grumpy answers, & when the next day it appeared that the horsemen were not off, & that they still made excuses, he let me go off with 10,000 rupees, more to get rid of my remonstrances than anything else. Just as I was leaving his tent I said—“ It may be necessary, General, to go on to Bamian,” to which he replied—“ Nonsense, don't run any risk.”

Well, off I went, and wrote to him from the Kuzzilbash headquarters that I saw that unless I went myself they would not start that night, and might delay on the road, and hoped he would excuse my going with them.

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He continues the story in a letter to Selina of September 21st.

After paying the sowars, we mounted at about eight-thirty p.m. (I had been advised to go in native costume) and with six hundred sowars started for Bamian. That night we went about fifty miles to Sir-i-Chushmah, and the next day I had the exquisite gratification of receiving a letter from Major Pottinger saying that he had succeeded in bribing the man who had charge of them to bring them back towards Kabul ! On the night of the 16th, we marched about fifty miles to Kaloo, which is two stages from Bamian, and where I had the happiness to find all the prisoners. Conceive my happiness !

The delight of the prisoners on his arrival has been recorded by several of their number.¹ The journal kept by Vincent Eyre during the eight and a half months of their captivity gives a vivid description of the privations and hardships which they had been called upon to endure, and recent information had reached them, that at Akbar Khan's orders they were to be conveyed to Bokhara and there sold, by twos and threes, as slaves to Turkistan chiefs. They had, in consequence, collected money amongst themselves to bribe the Commander of their guard, who was no doubt also influenced by rumours of British successes, and had undertaken to bring the party back in the direction of Kabul.

They had started the day before, and were seated at noon on the 17th in the shade of a fort near the Kaloo mountain when, in the words of Vincent Eyre :

We had only rested a couple of hours when a body of horse were descried descending into the valley down the

¹ *Journal of Imprisonment in Afghanistan*, by Lieutenant Vincent Eyre, Bengal Artillery.

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distant pass of Hajeejuk. In an instant all were on the alert. The nearer approach of the party enabled us to recognise the friendly banner of the Kuzzilbash streaming in the air. A few minutes more of eager suspense elapsed, when Sir Richmond Shakespear, galloping up to where we stood, dissipated every doubt. Our gallant countryman was greeted on our side with no boisterous cheers of triumph—our joy was too great, too overwhelming for the tongue to utter, as it is for my feeble pen to describe.

Their Afghan guardian was at first fearful that the rescue party would rob him of the credit which he considered to be his due, whereupon Richmond lifted the turban from his own head and placed it on his—a very high mark of honour according to native custom.

All danger was not yet at an end ; large bodies of the enemy were still at large, and he at once sent a letter to his general, asking for support. This matter had already been the occasion of a lively intercourse between the two generals. Nott, on the opposite side of the city, was considerably nearer to Bamian, but when Pollock sent a member of his staff, suggesting that a detachment of the Kandahar division should be dispatched, the former not only sent a reply which was tantamount to a refusal, but was insultingly rude to the officer who brought the message, nor, on receiving a personal visit from his brother general on the following day, did he recede from his position.¹ He excused himself on the score of sickness in camp and a dearth of supplies, and further declared that he understood that the recovery of the prisoners was a matter of indifference to the Government. Nott was a compe-

¹ From the time of the junction of the two armies, Pollock, as senior in rank, was in command.

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tent general and a strong character, and it is safe to say that if he and not Elphinstone had been in command, the ignominious treaty with the Afghans would never have been signed, and the evacuation would have been carried out in a very different manner. But his temper was bad and his outlook narrow.

In his written reply to Pollock, dispatched on the very day that the rescue party reached Kaloo, he stated his opinion as follows :

I sincerely think that sending a small detachment will and must be followed by deep disaster. No doubt Mahomed Akbar, Shumshoodien and the other chiefs, are uniting their forces, and I hourly expect to hear that Sir R. Shakespear is added to the number of British prisoners.

On return to his own camp, Pollock ordered General Sale, with a detachment of the Jalalabad force, to advance to the support of the returning party. It must have been a grateful task. He had parted with his wife in Kabul in the autumn of 1841. Richmond, in the continuation of his letter to Selina of the 21st, refers to the meeting.

On the 20th at Urghundee, about seventeen miles from this, we found General Sale with some of our troops, and now, thank God, the prisoners are safe. Sir R. Sale's meeting with his wife and daughter was a sight worth seeing. I am too confused just now to enter into more detail.

In forwarding to Government Major Pottinger's account of the captivity and release, Pollock writes :

Had Sir R. Shakespear arrived with his party a few hours later, it is probable that we should not have re-

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covered the prisoners, as Sooltan Jan arrived soon after the prisoners from Bamian with one thousand horse, and would, no doubt, have followed them had he not heard of the force sent to protect them.

Poor old General Elphinstone was no longer of their number ; worn out by suffering and hardships, he had passed away in April. There were none about him who failed to realize in how great a measure the tragedy had been due to his incompetence, but they realized also that he had been sent, against his own desire, to take up an appointment which demanded at least a measure of health and strength. During the last phase his patience and fortitude had won for him the deep sympathy of all his fellow captives.¹

Hustled continually from place to place with inadequate transport,² sleeping in the open, or in filthy Afghan quarters, it is astonishing that so few of them died. During the eight months of captivity, the gates of birth had opened also, and their numbers were recruited by four new arrivals.

Three days before Elphinstone's death, after an exhausting day's march in torrential rain, the wife of one of the officers gave birth to a daughter, and after one day's rest, was obliged to remount her horse for the next stage of their progress.

There were in all eight children with the party,

¹ There was one exception—Brigadier Shelton—but he was a complete egoist. Lady Sale relates that on the arrival of the rescue party, “General Shelton was much offended at Sir R. not having called on him first, and reported his arrival in due form.”

² Mostly on horseback or in camel-litters, but the supply of animals at times ran short.

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who, with 37 officers and ladies and 56 non-commissioned officers and men (mostly of the 44th Foot), who had been spared by their captors, brought the number up to 101 souls.

Financially Richmond had been a loser by his appointment, as appears from a letter to his brother John :

Everything has been very expensive, & I think no staff officer ought to indent on Commissariat cattle when the advance is detained for more animals, & my expenses consequently have been enormous.

But he continues :

For my part I am perfectly & entirely contented with the enclosed paper from the prisoners, which will be a good match for the Russian receipt for Khivan prisoners.

KABUL, 24th September, 1842.

DEAR SIR, Rescued as we have so lately been from a cheerless captivity, which threatened soon to terminate in hopeless slavery, in a land where the laws of humanity are unknown or unacknowledged, restored by a wonderful interposition of Providence, to country, friends & all that renders life desirable, it will ill become us, in the midst of our rejoicings, to forget those through whom the happy change has been effected. To you we are bound to utter our heartfelt thanks for the promptitude with which you marched a party of Kuzzilbash Horsemen to our assistance at a most critical period, to whose timely arrival amongst us at Kaloo, it may be attributed that our flight from Bamian was not intercepted.

By your energetic and decisive movement in our favour, you happily became a chief auxiliary to our escape, and enjoyed the satisfaction of conducting us to the safeguard of British troops, and of terminating our prolonged hardships and anxieties.

To thank you adequately in words for so signal a service would be impossible, but we hope that you will receive this as a mark of the gratitude we feel towards you, and with

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every wish for your prosperity and happiness, subscribe
ourselves,

Your obliged and faithful servants,

FLORENTIA SALE.

ALEXANDRINA STURT.

JEAN C. BOYD.

FANNY MACNAGHTEN.

F. BOYD.

H. JOHNSON.

B. MELVILLE.

T. A. SOUTER.

R. WARBURTON.

C. GRIFFITHS.

C. HARRIS.

W. EVANS.

H. HAUGHTON.

H. DRUMMOND.

T. PALMER.

J. S. ALSTON.

GEO. T. BERWICK.

H. M. WILLIAMS.

J. NICHOLSON.

GEORGIANA MAINWARING.

ANNIE WALLER.

ROBERT WALLER.

GEORGE MEIN.

EMILY EYRE.

VINCENT EYRE.

EDWARD WEBB.

J. P. WALSH.

R. L. BURNETT.

ELDRED POTTINGER.

C. MACKENZIE.

JOHN J. POETT.

T. THOMSON.

G. ST. P. LAWRENCE.

JAMES AIREY.

J. SHELTON.

JOHN MAGRATH.

A. CRAWFORD.

Of these names, several are noted in a later chapter of history : but for Eldred Pottinger, the defender of Herat, the sands of time were already running out. He died at Hong-Kong in the following year, at the age of thirty-two.

Richmond's reply was not written until after the evacuation of Kabul, when the combined armies halted for some days at Jalalabad on their homeward way. It is short and simple :

To Lady Macnaghten, Lady Sale, etc., General Shelton and Major Pottinger.

DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I was this morning greatly gratified by receiving a very kind and flattering letter, signed by the ladies and officers who were lately prisoners at Bameean, and I hasten to request that you will express to them my sincere thanks for the very handsome terms in which they have spoken of my poor services.

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I shall ever consider it one of the happiest events of my life, that I should have had the good fortune to have been in any way instrumental in effecting your escape from Afghanistan.

I remain, dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your most obedient servant,

R. C. SHAKESPEAR.

CAMP, JELLALABAD, *Oct. 26th, 1842.*

The second occupation of Kabul had only lasted four weeks. On October 9th and 10th, by Pollock's orders, the great Bazaar, in which ten months before the mutilated remains of Macnaghten had been exposed, was utterly destroyed, and on the 12th the two divisions commenced the return march to Peshawar. He was a merciful man, and unlike Nott, who ruthlessly expelled all native refugees from his camp, took with him a pitiful company.

Pollock took forty-four guns and a large quantity of ordnance stores ; but not the least of his trophies were a large number of miserable mutilated natives of India, crippled by wounds or by the frost, who had escaped with their lives from the great wreck of Elphinstone's army. Pollock now provided them with carriage, appointed two officers to the charge of them, and conveyed them to Hindoostan.¹

The greater number of these unfortunates had been recovered from slavery in a punitive expedition sent to Kohistan, a few days before the evacuation. To reflective minds there was much that was painful in the final departure from Kabul. Numbers of Hindu shopkeepers, and others who had followed the fortunes of our occupation, had perforce to be left behind ; the city was, as usual, divided into warring factions, and it was not long

¹ Kaye, *War in Afghanistan.*

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before the new puppet prince, who had been installed on the throne, had to fly to India and throw himself upon British protection.

Richmond's last letter from the city, written on the 6th October to Augusta Low, strikes a sad note :

A subject which gives me much annoyance is, what is to become of those chiefs who have taken our part in the disturbances. I heard it said the other day, "Your Government is a great one, but it cannot afford to sacrifice its character. You come into this country and split the people into two parties, those who opposed you and those who were friends to you, and now you are obliged to leave those who have befriended you to certain destruction." The Kuzzilbash Chiefs and even the Vazeer declare they will accompany us to India. We may in time recover our military fame, but we must ever be detested in this country.

The Khyber Pass was traversed with little loss, and by the end of December the armies of Pollock and Nott had crossed the Sutlej. The news of the reoccupation of Kabul and the rescue of the prisoners was received in India with unbounded joy, and the Governor-General, well pleased that his ambiguous orders had redounded so entirely to his credit, left Simla for Ferozepore. The Army of Reserve, encamped on the great plain from which, four years before the ill-fated expedition had set forth, gave them a tumultuous welcome, but Lord Ellenborough, in spite of the prolonged festivities which he organized for their reception, laid aside none of his former prejudices.

Sale, at the head of Jalalabad garrison, was the first to arrive, and the Governor-General, who personally directed most of the details for their triumphant entry, went forth on December 17th

to meet him. Decorative arches were erected, a temporary bridge thrown over the Sutlej, and an "avenue" of 250 elephants stationed along one part of the route, which had been trained to make a simultaneous salaam and greet the returning heroes with the strange sound that those animals on occasion emit. Unfortunately on this occasion *they did not*; possibly the mahouts were at fault.

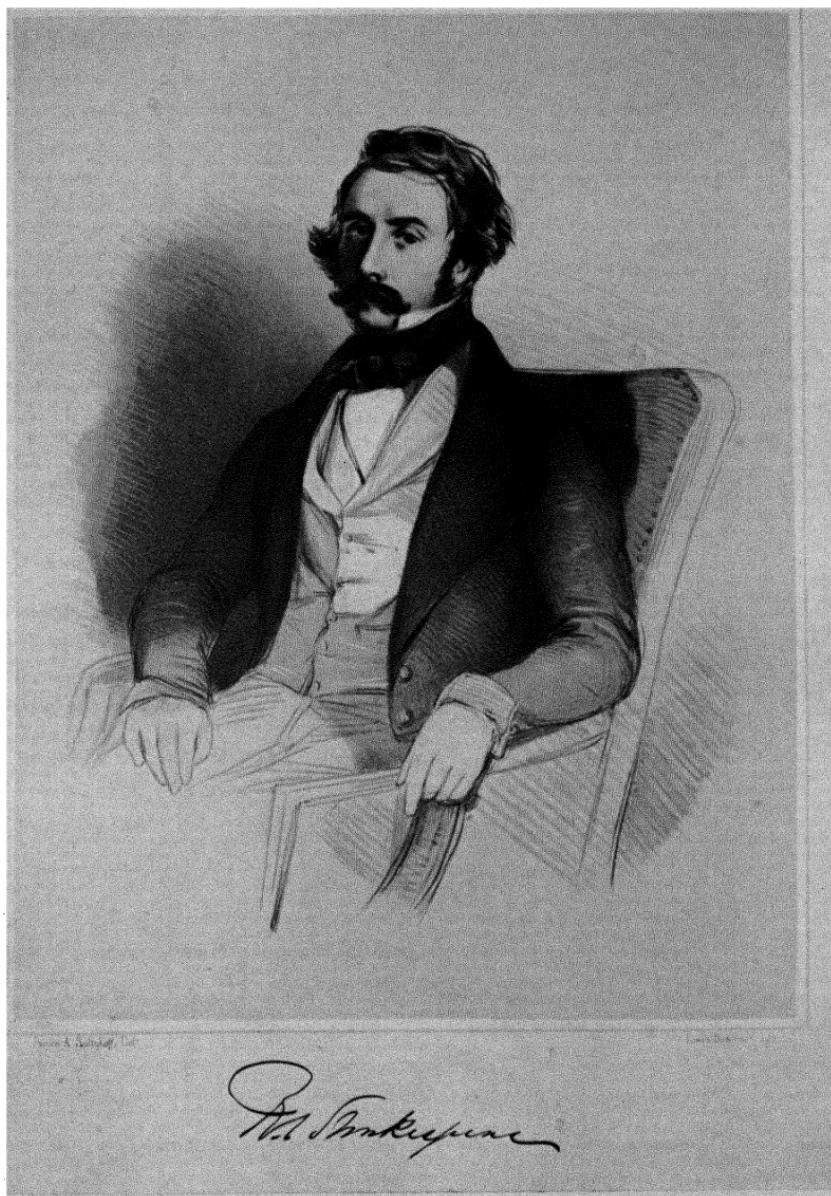
Richmond writes scornfully of the arch of triumph and the ornamentation of the bridge—"all of common cloth, dyed of the Indian ribbon pattern. Some boatman's 'tamasha,' the natives say."

Pollock's division came in on the 19th, and Nott's on the 23rd, but the Commander-in-Chief says in his journal :¹

I wished to have one of the reserve divisions to receive each of the divisions as it came, but he [Lord Ellenborough] did not desire that the honours paid to the garrison should be extended to any other part of the army. This I regret, for they have all seen hard work, great exposure, and some arduous days of service.

From the following incident, recounted by Richmond to John Shakespear, it appears that even the favoured garrison had occasion for resentment. Lord Ellenborough, with whom discrimination was not a strong point, had conceived a marked dislike for Political Officers in general. They were, as often as not, young military men of marked capacity, but the authority which they exercised over senior Commanders had given rise to ill-feeling, and the dual control had often proved mischievous in the extreme. Major George

¹ Sir Jasper Nicholl's MSS. journal, quoted by Kaye.



From an engraving of a drawing by Prince A. Soltykoff

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Macgregor had been Political Agent at Jalalabad, but the fiat which had gone forth in January, subordinating the political to the military element, made no difference to his cordial relations with Sale, with whom he had marched to Kabul in the capacity of A.D.C.

FEROZEPORE, 21st December, 1842.

... The illustrious garrison came in on the 17th, and Lord Ellenborough paid them every attention. They dined with him that night. He drank the healths of many officers, but would not propose Macgregor's health, when up jumped old Sale, saying, "His Lordship has proposed the health of many officers, and he hoped he would be allowed to propose the health of one to whom he was much indebted both in the cabinet and in the field. He begged to propose the health of Major George Macgregor." In a moment up sprang the whole of the Illustrious and all the visitors, shouting and hurrahing, receiving the toast with marked enthusiasm. Lord E. must have felt that even a G.-G. cannot throw a slight with impunity on a gallant and distinguished officer. Old Sale behaved nobly.

For nearly two months the whirl of reviews and festivities was carried on. Lord Ellenborough was promoted to an Earldom, and the G.C.B. bestowed on both Pollock and Nott. Richmond was granted leave in January, which he decided to spend at Lucknow, and on the 28th March he was given the appointment of Deputy Commissioner at Saugor. General Pollock, at parting, sent him two appreciative letters, in the second of which he says :

I have no hesitation in thus officially stating that the talent, zeal & ability which you displayed while you officiated as my Military Secretary were of the first order. . . .

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After enumerating his services in the field, the letter continues :

It may be that the value of your services on the last mentioned occasion [the rescue of the prisoners] has not been fully understood, otherwise it is probable you would have received some honorary distinction at the close of the campaign, but I still hope that on promotion to a company, you will obtain a Brevet-Majority¹ & the decoration of the Bath.

Before the dispersal of the great military assembly at Ferozepore, Dost Mahommed was set at liberty. His return to Kabul was greeted with acclamation, and his strong hand soon re-established his former authority over the turbulent tribes over which he was destined to rule for another twenty years.

To gauge the character of his son Akbar Khan, the arch-villain of the piece, is not easy for the Western mind, for although there is little doubt that he was mainly responsible for the massacre,² yet, in personal contact with British officers, including those wholly in his power, he showed, almost invariably, courtesy and consideration, sternly reproving any brutality on the part of his followers.

And so ended the tragic story of British interference with the internal affairs of Afghanistan, the inferences of which were speedily recognized—

¹ He was not gazetted to a Brevet Majority until December, 1848, for services in the second Sikh War. The C.B. was bestowed on him many years later.

² Vincent Eyre learnt from an authentic source that :

“ On the passage of our troops through the Khoord-Kabul Pass, he followed with some Chiefs in the rear, and in the same breath called to the Giljyes in *Persian* to desist from —and in *Pushtoo* to continue firing.”

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a story of incredible blunders, and worse than blunders, a lowering of national prestige, in matching intrigue with intrigue, and pandering to the cupidity of a treacherous and ruthless foe, and yet a story shot through with many instances of individual heroism.

CHAPTER VIII

Home by the Overland Route, 1843

EARLY in December, 1842, John Low left Lucknow for Calcutta, and after an absence of thirty-eight years turned his face homewards.

George Beechey,¹ a son of Sir William Beechey, who had migrated to India in 1830, was now Court Painter and Controller of the Household to the King of Oudh, and before his departure my grandfather was asked by the British community of the city to sit to him for a full-length portrait, which was placed in the Banqueting Hall—subsequently to be destroyed in the Mutiny.

Pending the arrival of his successor, his brother-in-law, feeling very forlorn, was left in charge at the Residency. The appointment to Lucknow had been given to General Nott. It was the custom for the incoming Resident to select his own staff, but the General wrote to Lord Ellenborough to tell him of his decision to retain the services of the 1st Assistant—saying with characteristic conscientiousness :

¹ Beechey, who was a frequent exhibitor at the Royal Academy, had married an Indian wife, his portrait of whom—under the name of “Hinda”—created quite a sensation in London.

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... Like many others, I have relations & friends of merit in the Service, but it shall never be said that I favour these to the exclusion of others of greater fitness for the appointment.

In some trepidation John Shakespear wrote to Richmond for a character of his new Chief, and was not reassured by the reply that he was "a cantankerous old gentleman!"

The poor General's term of office was short: he was in bad health, and sailed for England before the year was out, dying there in January, 1845.

His successor, curiously enough, was General Pollock, under whom Shakespear, who was a singularly lovable and modest man, also served harmoniously.

At Calcutta all available members of the family were once more assembled, and two new recruits from home were rapturously welcomed. These were the sons of the much-loved "Aunt Ritchie."

The younger,¹ a lad of seventeen, had long been destined for the Company's service, but for William Ritchie,² a young man of great ability, who had just been called to the Bar, other hopes had been entertained.

His prospects seemed of the fairest, but his father had recently sustained heavy money losses, and the very spoilt child of Southampton Row days had become the mainstay of his family. Realizing that he could do nothing to help them while waiting for briefs, he wrote to his relations

¹ Ensign John Ritchie, died at Dinapur, *æt.* twenty-three.

² William Ritchie, born 1817, Advocate-General of Bengal, and Legal Member of the Supreme Council. Died at Calcutta in 1862.

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in India, and hearing that the moment was eminently favourable for making a start at the Calcutta Bar, he embarked with his young brother in September, 1842.

William Ritchie was leaving all that he most cared for behind him, for he had just become engaged to be married, and his future happiness as well as his parents' comfort in life were solely dependent on his future exertions in the new country for which he was bound, but no heaviness of mood could withstand the exhilaration of scudding through the waves under full sail, and on September 19th he wrote to his fiancée, Augusta Trimmer :

We have literally flown by every vessel on the same course with ourselves . . . , & a finer sight I have never seen than to see our gallant ship bound over the gigantic waves that struck her, without for a moment checking her majestic career.¹

On arrival at the mouth of the Hoogly on December 8th, the passengers were overjoyed to come once more into contact with the outer world.

A few hours more brought us the heart-stirring news of our success in Cabul & China, & (what we had so long wished for) a file of newspapers. Most greedily we devoured the tidings they contained, some with more anxiety than myself, . . . but none with greater joy, for the papers were full of the praise of my friend & cousin, Richmond Shakespear, & I had again the happiness of listening with pride to the success of one who is to me like a brother.

¹ This, and other extracts from William Ritchie's letters are taken from *The Ritchies in India*, by Gerald Ritchie (John Murray, 1920).

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On Sunday the 11th, at 8 p.m., they anchored off the Cooley Bazaar at Calcutta :

We slept that night on board,—at 7 the next morning Major Irvine came for us, & we set foot on land for the first time for 102 days.

From the moment of landing William Ritchie was claimed by the Irvines as a permanent guest, and to his mother he wrote :

I confess that the life of a bachelor in Calcutta “ ne me souriat pas trop,” for in it there is scarcely any medium between complete solitariness & a constant round of gaiety. . . . As it is there is no happier home in India than that which I owe to the Irvine’s benevolence.

His letters contain some strictures on the bearing of the new Governor-General, who at the moment was the subject of ribald mirth in Calcutta over the affair of the Somnath Gates.¹

Lord Ellenborough is universally spoken of with anything but respect, & has acquired the title of the “ Mountebank of the Sutlej,” in which I have heard both Major Irvine & Sir Lawrence Peel acquiesce. . . .

In a letter sent in January to his fiancée, he is able to give a good account of his prospects :

. . . The judges have all been very friendly, particularly Sir Lawrence Peel.² . . . I forgot to tell you in my enumeration of the advantages of the Calcutta Bar that

¹ With “great pomp and circumstance” he had caused to be restored to the temple of Somnath some sandal-wood gates which had been carried off to Ghazni 800 years before. The gesture was received with chilling indifference by the Hindus. Moreover, as he had been warned by Major (afterwards Sir Henry) Rawlinson, they proved to be imitation !

² The Chief Justice. (He was a nephew of Sir Robert Peel.)

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the fees (when you get them) are nearly three times as high as those at home. . . .

To finish telling you all the *events* that have happened to me in this last month, know that Mrs. Halliday, a sister of my mother's whom I have never seen, has had the generosity to give me £100 & to John £50,—that John has gone for a while to do duty at Barrackpore.

He is exulting in a horse given him by a cousin, as you will be glad to hear I am also, for this very day has Col. Low given me a strong & handsome bay steed, which will figure both in my buggy (a gift also—from the Irvines) & under my weight.

Now let me introduce you, as I long to do, to some of the large family gathering which now gladdens the hospitable home of the Irvines. . . . These I have already made known to you.

Next come Col. & Mrs. Low—she is your namesake, Augusta, & somewhat resembles you in sweetness of disposition.

They have long held one of the finest appointments in India . . . & have been used to quite a royal residence & state. . . . Never were people less spoilt by high position, they are both the most warm-hearted, unaffected persons you can imagine.

No man in India is more esteemed than he is . . . for he combines the soundest judgment & finest determination with the mildest manners & unbounded courtesy & benevolence.

The exercise of the latter (which in an address to him by the whole Christian community of Oude is styled the “liberality of a prince”¹) will prevent, I fear, the carrying home of the large fortune which he might have accumulated. . . .

In him & Irvine are two fine specimens of the men to whose qualities we have owed our ascendancy in the East. . . .

¹ The passage in question runs: “The extreme liberality of your contributions to all objects of public utility . . . is generally known, but none but those who have benefitted by them are aware of the extent of your private charities. No one ever appealed to you in vain, and according to the circumstances you either gave advice as a friend or afforded relief as a prince.”

HOME BY THE OVERLAND ROUTE

The last two Governor-Generals, Lord William Bentinck & Auckland, were both excellent men, & by their combination of humanity with firmness have conferred infinite benefits on the native population,—the latter, indeed, committed one error in military policy by invading Cabul, but has left behind him a name very different from that which the present Governor will ever earn. . . .

I have promised to introduce you to my family & not to Governor-Generals, but I fear I must postpone my description of George Shakespear, a fat, shy, eccentric, but most entertaining old fellow [he was 33 !], & Selina, a sweet interesting girl of 21.

In the following month, after the departure of his cousins, he wrote to the same correspondent of 'the—

pain of parting from friends in whose society one had found much to charm, & of whom one is sure deeply to regret the loss. I allude particularly to—my kind friends & cousins, the Lows & George Shakespear, who went by the *India* steamer on the 10th last.

* * * * *

George Shakespear was leaving his lonely and jungly district for his first home leave, and he and his sister must have recalled their first voyage together—twenty-six years before.

They were making their way home under different conditions, for the East India Company was now running a small fleet of wooden paddle-steamers which carried the mails (and passengers for the overland route) between India and Suez. Among the Clatto papers was a red leather copy-book, found to contain the copy of a journal written by Augusta on the homeward journey for her sister Marianne, with whom Selina was remaining on in India.

It gives a good idea of the difficulties and discomforts attending these early journeys to and

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from India via Egypt before the construction of the Suez Canal. My grandfather, however, appears to have enjoyed himself throughout with all the zest of a schoolboy on holiday. The party included an efficient woman, named Bradford, nurse to the little Irvine, now over two years old, and two men-servants.

The first entry was made while steaming down the mouth of the Hoogly :

Feb. 9th, 1843.

We embarked on board the *India* steamer late in the evening ; the moon shone clear & bright, & as the boat carried us slowly to the ship, showed us the whole city of palaces laid out before us.

10th.

We started at daybreak just after dear Irvine left the ship, soon after which the steamer came aground, but so gently we were scarcely aware of it—the tide coming in soon floated her again. We sit down a party of upwards of forty persons at breakfast & dinner . . .

A few days later, she writes :

Little Irvine is very unhappy in the cabins & feels the close confinement after the fine large rooms in Calcutta, . . . George has been suffering from sea-sickness, & I have therefore no good saying of his to relate.

At Madras they coaled and took in more passengers.

16th Feb.

Late this evening we reached Madras ; the next day George & Low went on shore, but as we were only to remain a few hours I did not land.

Poor George was ejected from the Club House to which they first drove, a rule having been lately passed that no stranger should be allowed to enter who is not a member of the Bengal or the Bombay club.

Low says poor George drove off with his servant, look-

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ing piteously at him & saying—"I am rejected." However, it appears he made himself very comfortable at a Punch House, where he played billiards at a very old table, full of holes, with a little black boy, who he says gave him ten & beat him.

From the club, John Low drove out to pay a call at the "very pretty country house of the Governor, Lord Tweedale," returning to the Punch House for George.¹

They sailed the same evening, and Augusta recounts :

The coal dust has annoyed us a good deal and covered everything in our cabins, but at Galle they tell us it will be much worse, and that we must land. Our cabin is unfortunately on the side in which the ports are for taking in coal. . . .

Bradford is quite wretched and says : "We might as well live in a coal hole."

We have taken in six more passengers, and the table is so crowded that some of the gentlemen are obliged to eat and sleep on deck. . . .

We had a dreadful storm last night just as it was getting dark : the ship struck on a reef where we remained aground for some minutes, but most providentially the efforts made immediately to back her off the bank succeeded, and with joyful hearts we found ourselves in a short time afloat again. . . . George has lost four caps made by Messrs. Gibson & Co. overboard, also the straw hat which was too small for Low, and he is now obliged to wear a strange thing on his head like a little horn.

The day before they reached Galle, the unfortunate George was confined to his cabin in consequence of a heavy fall.

21st Feb. We reached Galle at daybreak this morning. . . . In the afternoon George was feeling better, and we

¹ George, eighth Marquess of Tweedale, Governor and C.-in-C., Madras, 1842-8.

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landed for a few hours. Low hired a palkee carriage drawn by a stout little poney, led by a man who ran us along at a great pace . . . and we drove off to the Cinnamon Gardens, about four miles from the town, over an excellent road along the sea beach with groves of cocoanuts on each side of us. The scenery was exceedingly pretty, to us from boardship it appeared like fairy-land, and we drove merrily along with several of our party preceding us in similar conveyances.

However, on reaching a river they all had to alight and trudge for half an hour through heavy sand.

We were all of us completely knocked up with fatigue and heat. The cinnamon trees grew together like a jungle ; the natives were most civil, & one of them (who could speak a little English) interpreted for us, & they showed us how they stripped the cinnamon off the trees.

We met the owner & his family, & they kindly asked us to walk into their house & gave us a delicious draught of cocoanut milk, which was most cooling & delightful.

We then plodded our weary way over the sand again till we reached our palkee carriages, when we joyfully reseated ourselves & drove back to Galle, a very small town composed of a few streets with houses built in the Dutch style.

After dining at the hotel, where they much appreciated a Malay curry—" the chief ingredient of which is cocoanut milk & pineapples stewed in cinamon," they returned to the ship.

We were most happy to find dear George continuing very comfortable ; he really had a wonderful escape & has much cause for thankfulness.

During the following days poor George was reduced to that condition which finds relief in the registering of good resolutions :

24th. The ship has rolled dreadfully the last two days. We are however to have no more of this dreadful swell they say after to-day.

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We have also been most wretched in our cabins owing to the steam coming through the partition, the boiler being close to us.

I saw George to-day ; he has been a good deal pulled down by his fall, & declares he thinks wherever he is put on shore, there he will remain, & never go on board another vessel. He says also he will leave off cheroots & beer.

But for a comet visible on two nights, there was little to relate until the boat touched at Aden. On the evening of March 3rd it appeared :

most brilliant, like a feather of fire, with the nucleous distinctly visible ; over Lat. $10\frac{1}{2}$ N. and Long. 55, it sank below the horizon as the moon rose.

At Aden¹ they made plans for landing at Kosseir and making a trip to Thebes.

March 7th.

We reached Aden this morning at 7 o'clock. The entrance is through a bold rocky outline, but the place itself is miserable in the extreme. I walked to the hotel, which is a raised bungalow with a mud roof & the centre room with mud walls ; all the sleeping apartments having merely mat partitions.

They were however quite new & appeared clean, & we all had visions (particularly Bradford) of passing a most comfortable night. Low & most of the gentlemen started on camels for the cantonments immediately. . . .

George (who had been on shore all day buying stores & equipment for the trip to Cosseir) took a walk with me, & we both wished you had been with us to enjoy the delightful sea breeze & pick up oyster shells with us, which were abundant.

When we returned to our hotel we found not only a large party of the *India* on shore, but another very merry party of some of the youngest officers belonging to the corps at Aden ; they commenced by flinging two or three

¹ Aden had been captured and annexed to British India four years before this date.

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jugs & glasses out of the door, & finished late at night by standing on the table when they gave their toasts. This, with the mosquitos was quite sufficient to keep us awake all night.

March 8th.

Low, having got a nice poney for me, got on a camel himself, & we started shortly after daylight to the cantonments. . . .

Such a primitive place I could never have imagined, & if we had not been told that the officers' houses were there, we should have thought it was only the sepoys' lines. On our return we met George on a very short, stout little poney, going along at an easy trot with two other gentlemen ; he went up to the Turkish wall & saw the fortifications they are making against the encroachments of the Arabs, & was told that if he went beyond a certain spot, he would probably be shot.

We returned to a late breakfast ; the water is not good at Aden, what they gave us for bathing was like thick fishy soup, but Bradford said " she daresay it had some virtuous properties in it ! " . . .

George has spent about £30 here in beer & supplies for the journey to Thebes. On coming on board he found that the clothes he had sent to the wash had not come, but the Parsee hotel keeper (a very civil man) appeared with another man bearing George's wearing apparel, which was quite a relief, for he had just been saying to me—" Naked shall I return ! "

Very unfortunately two of the passengers who had gone to cantonments did not return in time¹ ; the Captain waited some time, & after firing several guns the *India* set sail.

There were at this date two steamships of 1,600 tons plying between Falmouth and Alexandria monthly, owned by the P. & O. Company,²

¹ The young gentlemen in question were fortunate in subsequently catching the Bombay steamer.

² The earlier "Peninsular Co." had conveyed the mails only to Gibraltar, from whence they were taken by Admiralty packet to Malta, and by another on to Alexandria.

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which had secured the contract for carrying the mails on the Mediterranean side. Between the Bengal and Bombay vessels there was therefore some rivalry, as the passengers on both ships were anxious to secure their berths in the steamer of the month at Alexandria.

We find there are some fears entertained that the Bombay steamer may be before us, and some of the passengers, we find, have written to the Captain making a protest against our landing at Cosseir ; however he says there is plenty of time and that he will still put in there for us.

9th. To-day about 12 o'clock we entered the Red Sea. We passed Mocha at six o'clock.

15th. In consequence of a gale of wind which has been blowing against us all the last two days, we were unable to land at Cosseir, which we passed at day-break this morning ; the Captain said no boats could live in such a sea, and that it was impossible to wait for fear of the Bombay steamer passing us, and the rest of the passengers being consequently too late for the steamer in the Mediterranean, so all our trouble and preparations for our journey to Thebes has been in vain ! *L'homme propose mais Dieu dispose !*

19th. At 3 o'clock this morning the Captain came down and woke us and told us to look through our ports as we were passing through the Straits of Jubal.

" Oh had I Jubal's lyre," I might tell you what a grand sight it was by moonlight passing close under high mountains through this narrow channel. We anchored off Suez at 9 o'clock.

Ninety miles of desert had to be traversed between Suez and Cairo. It was not until two years later that the P. & O. took over the organization of the overland route, providing two-wheeled omnibuses for the trek, and steamers and canal boats to convey passengers between Cairo and Alexandria.

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In 1843 the arrangements were in local hands, and of a more haphazard description.

Unfortunately we were late in getting off, & the distance was so great to the shore that with the tide against us, it took us about three hours.

When we landed about 4 o'clock, we found the other passengers had carried off all the horses, & we could not therefore start until 8 p.m. for Cairo.

We therefore took a walk. The Consul's house, we were told, was over the gate-way of what was called the hotel, a miserable building with rooms here & there, up & down small flights of steps. The principal room where we dined was one which Buonaparte had once occupied. . . .

I lay down on the divan for a short time, & was at once attacked by one of the plagues of Egypt, the fleas!

Our vans were exactly like butchers' carts in England, with the addition of a chinz covering over the top, & open at both ends.

We were obliged to get blankets to let down & keep out the night air, for the cold in the desert was more piercing than you can well imagine. Our van was one, they told us, for "6 people"! Low, George, & myself, with each a carpet bag completely filled it,—Bradford, Baby, and the two men servants going in another van made to carry four persons.

We reached the first resting house at 1 o'clock at night, and found some of our fellow passengers just starting for the next stage.

The heavy baggage was behind them, conveyed by camels, and it was not expected to reach them at Cairo for two days after their arrival.

For the transit across the desert you pay £6-9/- a head, and for each camel two dollars and a half, and for passengers anxious to overtake the steamer on the Mediterranean, the journey generally occupies 27 hours. . . . In this case a person ought to endeavour to be one of the first to land as the arrangements are at present not good for fresh horses, owing perhaps in part to Mr. Hill's death [the proprietor of the Cairo hotel], and also to the mortality among the cattle. . . .

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20th. After resting for some hours at this, No. 6 station house, we started about 8 o'clock, and we were really glad to be off, for the fleas were so troublesome we were unable to sleep.

We had the greatest difficulty in making the horses start, and for the first mile they were most troublesome. The man at last applied a chisel to them, which to our horror appeared to be an effectual spur.

George said he never heard before of chiselling horses to make them go. . . .

We reached No. 4 station house at 1 o'clock. Low called out to me immediately we drove up, to look at the pretty Arab woman ; she turned out however to be an English woman from Kent, married to an Arab. She had charge of the house and said when the steamers were expected she always came out to wait on the passengers, returning to Cairo by the empty vans. She was most civil and tripped about in a light and airy way. George however was quite put out by her politeness, and said, as we drove off : " Sooner than have that pretty damsels flitting about him, he would have fled across the desert on foot." He was not aware how truly he would have had to do so, for after we had gone about two hours and it was nearly dark, the horses refused to move.

Low and George were obliged to get out and walk, and putting Bradford and Baby into our van, and the horses of the other van into ours, we proceeded in this manner to No. 2 station house, where we were obliged to sleep all night . . . , Low and George having walked about 9 miles through heavy sand. There was a great scene of confusion when we arrived, the passengers from England for the Bombay steamer having just arrived.

21st. We woke, all refreshed by our night's rest, and started after breakfast. At No. 8, where we changed horses, we had our first view of Cairo, and a delightful sight it was, the blue Nile with the green valley refreshing our eyes after the dreary wastes of the desert.

We entered Cairo about 1 o'clock, and drove up to Hill's hotel ; this was in a narrow dark street, and the situation appeared so wretched, we were rejoiced to find they had no room for us, and we drove off to the new French hotel—D'Orient. We took leave of our fellow passengers who were going on to Alexandria. . . .

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Our own baggage being all behind, we intend to remain for the "Great Liverpool" which will start next month for England, and in the meantime to see the "Wonders of Egypt."

Of the wonders of Ancient Egypt they saw very little, although ten happy days were spent in the French hotel in Cairo. So little was then known of Egyptology in comparison with the wealth of knowledge now available—so many of Egypt's treasures still lay buried beneath layers of soil or sand. The Nile and highways of the country had only of quite recent years become safe for travellers.

The Pasha, Mehemet Ali,¹ whose power had been cemented by the most ruthless cruelty, had to his credit the maintenance of perfect public order, and the resumption of the traffic between Egypt and the Far East was largely due to his construction in 1819–20 of the new canal (the old one having fallen into disuse) linking the Nile and Alexandria. But Egypt was still a land of bondage; twenty thousand unfortunate fellahin, conscripted for the task, had perished at its completion.

My grandparents were most anxious to catch a glimpse of this rebellious vassal of the Ottoman Empire, whose military prowess and restless ambition had embroiled the Great Powers of Europe. In the evening of their arrival they ordered the carriage belonging to the hotel, and drove out to Shoobea, his country residence.

¹ Mehemet Ali (1769–1849), an Albanian by birth and of humble parentage. In 1841 his rule, which had extended to Syria and Arabia, was restricted to Egypt, but at the same time the pashalik, hitherto nominally held on a yearly tenure, was conferred on him and his heirs on a hereditary basis.

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We drove along the banks of the Nile through a beautiful avenue of trees. When we arrived we were told we could not go in as the Pasha had just arrived, however after some talking through our interpreter—an Italian who is to act as our dragoman—we persuaded them to let us in, promising only to go where they told us.

. . . No account I could give you would tell you what a delightful garden Shoobeia is—the most beautiful rose trees, "white and red" growing ten feet high, the finest orange trees, geraniums and myrtles, made the air so full of sweet scents we seemed to be suddenly transported into a paradise.

At one end of the garden was an aviary, with a few rooms with divans ; close to these we were told were the rooms the Pasha occupied, but we were not allowed to go in there. Opposite to this building was another, containing an immense marble bath, which is lit up with gas, out of which the Pasha had just come. . . .

We hurried home, just in time for table d'hôte.

The day following, when they ascended to the citadel on donkeys, they were more successful :

The Pasha, our old enemy, had just arrived, and at first the people said we could not see the palace, but after a little "talk" they took us over some delightful apartments with a fine view of the city.

However, on that much-feared personage emerging from his private rooms, they were hustled along to a gateway, where for some time they sat in a niche.

At last we had the pleasure of seeing the Pasha himself ; he is a fine fresh-looking old man with a beautiful long white beard ; he was followed by a number of men on foot with matchlocks—himself on horseback.

In the court-yard, as they were departing, they encountered an acquaintance of the name of Stewart, with an Italian favourite of the Pasha,

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who had been permitted to bring two friends to dine at the palace, and invited my grandfather to come as the second guest.

This offer Low thankfully accepted. (In spite of having on a pair of miserable leather inexpressibles. J. Low.)

George meanwhile, and another man who was of the party, had to content themselves with peeping through the door at the revellers.

Low says the Pasha¹ has very courteous manners, & received him very civilly, asking many questions—where he came from, etc. He also said he intended to make the canal to Suez, & then enquired if he had seen the comet—what it was, etc. He also offered them coffee, which was said to be a great compliment.

During the ensuing week, Augusta Low visited both the English and the German missionary centres. She was also taken by the Pasha's Italian friend to pay a call on a Levantine family, where she was enchanted with the beauty of the dresses.

Low & George, in the meantime, rode out to the petrified forest—large mounds, half a mile round, of wood petrified, mixed with stones. They are about 10 miles ride from Cairo.

The land of Egypt was living up to its ancient reputation. During this year the country was devastated by locusts, and much damage caused by the Nile in flood.

In 1842 there had been a murrain among the cattle, and Augusta learned from the English

¹ Mehemet Ali was totally illiterate, being unable to read or write. The construction of the Suez Canal was not commenced until ten years after his death.

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missionary that the plague, which in the following year paid its last dreadful visitation, had already put in its appearance. Of her ride back from the mission house, which was situated in the Coptic quarter, she writes :

We returned through a number of dark, narrow streets, . . . one can well believe how dreadful such a disease will be in them, carrying off 1,000 persons a day they say when at its height.

On another day they went to the slave market :

We saw several Abyssinian women exposed for sale. There was a Turk evidently bargaining for one, feeling her arms and examining her. The slaves seemed fat and in good spirits : they were seated in a kind of open court with a small piece of sail extended over them to protect them from the sun and wind. Their food, which we saw, was a kind of pulse. On one of the women saying something, they all laughed, and they told us it was because she said she would like to be bought by that "young man."

This was George ! George said her selection was "a great trial."

In passing through the bazaars, she was as distressed as is the tourist of to-day by the prevailing ophthalmia, but fortunately another cause of partial blindness exists no longer :

Many parents, they say, used to put out one of their son's eyes to save them from the conscription.¹ The Pasha, hearing of this, immediately raised a one-eyed regiment !

They also visited an island where Ibrahim Pasha² had a beautiful garden—"said to be the

¹ The method employed was to press a small piece of nitrate of silver into the eyeball, and keep it tightly bandaged till the sight was destroyed.

² Son of Mehemet Pasha, a noted Egyptian general.

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place where Moses was found by Pharaoh's daughter," and on another day they were shown "Joseph's well" in the citadel.

There he was confined, they say, by Potiphar's wife ; it is a very deep well, & I doubt Joseph's having lived in it for twelve years as they told us.

Under Mehemet Pasha's orders a small museum had been formed in 1835, which was probably the one they were shown :

Dr. (illegible), who is an antiquary, offered to show us his museum of curiosities ; he is a curiosity himself, having adopted the Egyptian dress.

It appeared to make him quite wretched if we touched anything. He shewed us a necklace 5,000 years old, & the cast of a mould of the face of the Pharaoh of the Exodus.

He gave us an impresion of the seal of the High Priest of the Cheops of the pyramid.

It was late in the season and on account of the hot wind some projected expeditions had to be abandoned, but at length, on the first favourable occasion, the trio set off for the pyramids.

March 28th. We started very early (about 7 o'clock), taking with us some luncheon. Low procured for me one of the chairs¹ carried between two donkeys—one placed behind the other, and I found it a great relief from donkey riding to get occasionally off from one and into the other. We rode for about an hour and three-quarters to the river side through very pleasant avenues of cypress and other trees ; we passed two plague quarantine hospitals, which had guards placed before them to prevent people going near.

After crossing the Nile, our way lay through the most beautiful fields of wheat, beans and clover . . . the smell

¹ These donkey chairs were fastened between two long poles, which acted as shafts to the two animals placed fore and aft.

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was delicious, we had two hours' journey to the edge of the desert, from thence about a quarter of an hour to the pyramids.

Augusta Low was only thirty-six, but she had been nineteen years in a hot climate and had borne seven children. She had become somewhat stout, and physically lethargic. One glance at the ascent was enough, and she placidly awaited the return of her men-folk by the entrance to the interior shaft, from which she beheld the sudden emergence of some old acquaintances.

Selina will be surprised to hear that while waiting for Low I saw come out of the shaft first Mr. Clifford, and shortly after Prince Soltykoff. I wrote Selina's name on the stone where I sat. Low and George descended, supported each by two Arabs, into whose hands they appeared to have resigned themselves. After drinking some water, they felt refreshed and able to continue their exploring. The Arabs again seized upon Low (upon his announcing his intention of going down the shaft) two men preceding him with candles.

He visited the King's and the Queen's chambers, and on his return :

He entreated me to come down, and so I attempted it, but the dust was so unpleasant and the stooping posture so painful I got quite frightened and was obliged to return. . . . You should have seen George come out of the King's chamber ! he was all covered with dust and scarcely able to speak.

We then went to a small excavated room at a little distance where there are some old tables and chairs for the use of sightseers, and ate our luncheon. . . .

We then mounted our donkeys and went to see the Sphinx, which lies half buried in the sand ; we passed two marble coffins, left in the sand, out of which our guides said Col. Vyse had conveyed the bodies. This however is

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not true. We then came to a small stone building where they told us were paintings on the wall, and so, determining not to come so far and see nothing I crept in on hands and feet and saw some half effaced hieroglyphics. . . . We did not get back to our hotel till it was perfectly dark.

Their time was drawing to a close, but one morning :

Low and George went to "On," or Heliopolis—it is distant from Cairo about two hours' ride. At present there is nothing to see but one obelisk and some mounds.

My grandfather was anxious to see something of the Pasha's very efficient army,¹ which was trained by Frenchmen.

Low visited the military school at Gizeh, about five miles from Cairo. This school is for the education of the young men intended for the cavalry. . . . One of the Pasha's sons is being educated here. He was much pleased with all he saw at this institution.

On March 30th, he made his last excursion in search of knowledge !

Low visited the chicken ovens, crawling upon hands and knees into small rooms where he saw thousands of eggs ready to be hatched, and saw the whole process. He returned, covered with fleas, to lament he had not waited to see chicken ovens in London for one shilling, a gentleman at the hotel telling him he might have done so.

They were preparing to start for Alexandria :

March 31st. Low has taken a boat for us at Boulac in which we are to embark for Aftee (about 120 miles from

¹ The organization of the army on European models had been carried out under a Colonel Sève (Suleiman Pasha).

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thence) ; there, the man of whom we have hired the boat has written to provide us with a "track-boat" to take us down the canal to Alexandria.

The voyage to Aftee they suppose will take us 4 days and down the canal 16 hours. This however of course depends upon the wind, the passage having taken before now 30 hours only, and again 28 days with an unfavourable wind. George also goes with us, and has hired a boat. Our charges at this hotel have been most moderate—8 shillings a head for ourselves and 4 shillings for each servant ; this includes a good breakfast and dinner with a bottle of claret for each person at dinner.

April 1st. We rode to Boulac to embark on board our boats. . . . The expence of this boat is £18, this includes the track-boat to Alexandria. Messrs. Hill & Co., for the payment of £8, put on board a small kitchen with a cook, fowls, tea, sugar, etc., for the journey.

We saw George's cook being put on board supported by two men perfectly tipsy, so I doubt whether George will have good cooking or any cooking on his boat.

We found Prince Soltykoff at the Ghât looking for a boat for himself ; he came on board ours & said it was "un charmant bâateau." Of Mr. Clifford we took leave yesterday ; he is going off to Syria, but says he is almost tired of travelling. . . .

There are two steamers which ply between this place and Aftee for the convenience of passengers to and from Europe ; at Aftee you get into a track-boat tugged by steam—in this way you make the journey in 26 hours. These steamboats are so small and generally so crowded that one is much more comfortable going down in one's own boat.

April 4th. We have had a violent contrary wind until last night ; the steamer passed us this morning at daylight. Messrs. Hill & Co. had only put on board 4 days' provisions, we find, whereas we have been 4 days going half way.

George, who was before us for one and a half days we came up to to-day. Low and he went out shooting. Low brought back a brace of quail. William¹ (our servant)

¹ The nationality of the men-servants is never mentioned.

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said " Mr. Shakespear, he would shoot a big game, but I dont think he shot him."

In his absence George's cook got at his wine and drank three bottles of sherry, after which I saw him sitting knocking his head against a leg of mutton, George's sad and sole remains of Messrs. Hill's provisions.

We sent into a large village, and fortunately procured some fowls, eggs and a goose, otherwise we should have been famished. To give you some idea of the cheapness of food in Egypt, I must tell you that the goose cost one shilling, the fowls sixpence each and the eggs 17 for a penny.

Alexandria was reached at 3 a.m. on April 6th, and after sunrise they drove to the French hotel, where they remained for eleven days. One of the first antiquities viewed was later to become a familiar landmark on the banks of the Thames.

In the afternoon we rode to see " Pompey's pillar," (vulgarly so called). . . . We went to Cleopatra's Needles next ; they are two obelisks, one standing and the other fallen, covered with hieroglyphics, exactly similar. The fallen obelisk was presented by the Pasha to the English Govt., who have however never gone to the expence of removing it.

The fashionable evening drive was to the Rosetta Gate :

The whole vicinity of the town appears covered with ruins, & we have been told that large pillars are frequently dug up ; they appear to be building the new city from the ruins of the old.

On another evening they drove out to the site of the battle of Aboukir, taking with them Bradford and the child. After their survey, they searched for bullets, but none were to be found :

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However, Bradford found two old coins, they are so common here that anywhere among the ruins they are to be found. We left George searching for coins, & nothing but the fear of the Rosetta Gate being shut induced him at last to leave the spot.

The catacombs, which they rode out on donkeys to see, proved disappointing. The outer chambers were empty, and they were not tempted to crawl through narrow passages to the inner rooms where tombs and hieroglyphics were to be seen.

April 15th. . . . Hearing that the *Great Liverpool*, in consequence of sickness on her homeward voyage, might not come out this voyage, but perform quarantine in England, we took our passage in one of the French steamers —the *Tancred*.

17th. We came on board this morning, & found this vessel a most comfortable one. . . .

George came on board with us & we took leave of him at 9 o'clock.

George Shakespear's destination is not mentioned in the journal, nor has any letter or paper survived giving information as to how he spent the remaining eighteen months of his life. All that is known is that he died in Geneva, by his own hand, in October, 1844, and that it fell to the lot of William Ritchie in Calcutta to break the news to Marianne and the sorrowing Selina. The Lows reached Syra on the 19th, where the original intention had been to transfer to another steamer on its way from Constantinople to Malta, and there put in the prescribed three weeks of quarantine, but—

Finding that this steamer goes on to Athens, where

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there is only 14 days' quarantine, which commences from to-day, we have determined on proceeding there.

April 22nd. We arrived this morning & cast anchor in the Piraeus. The sky has the beautiful clear & high colour that we read of :

Not as in Northern climes, obscurely bright
But one unclouded blaze of living light.

On disembarkation, a row of aspirants to the coveted post of "guardians" paraded before them.

When we fixed on those we liked, the men touched us to shew that they went into quarantine with us. It was quite amusing to see how everyone avoided us when we came on shore with the yellow flag ; our jailor, a very gay gentleman in a picturesque Greek dress, came down to receive us, but fled if we approached him.

An unfortunate sailor touched one of our guardians, & he has been put in quarantine. . . .

We entered our prison at 12 o'clock.

They did not find themselves too badly off, having three tolerable bedrooms allotted to their party, and Byron, passages from whom are copiously quoted, and the study of Italian served to while away the time.

There were three courts in which to take exercise, one of which jutted out into the water.

The sea is most beautifully clear & transparent, & from our marine court of an evening we can see the fish & crabs at the bottom as if through a green glass.

They had also a boat in which they could row out to sea, and were permitted to land on the lonely shore where the empty sarcophagus, traditionally assigned to Themistocles, lay facing the Bay of Salamis.

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The "guardians," too, were more than obliging, and even proposed bringing the "moutons" to be milked in front of them in order to demonstrate that they were receiving a fresh daily supply. The manager of the Hotel D'Orient, which they were told was the best in Athens, proved most attentive in providing them with such papers as he possessed, and on May 2nd, when their period of detention expired, he sent a carriage in which they joyfully seated themselves for the ascent to the city.

She writes with delight of the four-mile drive from the port of Piræus—of the glimpses of the Acropolis and Temple of Theseus afforded by the winding road, and of the lovely contrast of the shadowy grey-green and silver of the olives and the verdant hues of the sprouting corn.

In the afternoon they strolled over to see the new royal palace, then in course of completion. The Bavarian prince¹ adopted as King after the "Convention of London" (by which, eleven years before, Greece had been constituted an independent kingdom) was most unpopular, and in the autumn of this very year a military revolt broke out, through which he was forced to dismiss the numerous Bavarians by whom he was surrounded, and accept a constitution.

King Otho's new palace,² which is almost finished, is an immense building, which appears to be built of marble, but is not so, but coated with a plaster made of marble; the pillars round the palace are of the Pentelic marble & have cost the enormous sum of £1,000 apiece, which has

¹ Son of Louis 1st of Bavaria; he was deposed in 1862.

² Now the Senate House of the National Assembly.

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disgusted the Greeks greatly, for they say numbers of them sacrificed their entire fortunes to emancipate their country from the Turks, & naturally expected that the Govt. would repay them, instead of which no one of these persons have been repaid, & King Otho has squandered immense sums on this palace.

The outside . . . resembles more a large hospital than a palace ; the interior however is most spacious, comfortable & beautiful. One of the Halls of Audience is being painted in fresco, the figures & scenes all represent the wars between the Turks & Greeks.

That evening they dined at the British Embassy, finding a note awaiting them at the hotel from Sir Edward Lyons, whom John Low had met in India, and having as fellow guests General Church,¹ and the officers of a frigate which had just come into port.

With an account of a visit to the Acropolis, and a last quotation, the notebook ends.

Nothing can exceed the magnificence of the ruins, or the loveliness of the scenery round, heightened by the beautiful tints of a Grecian sky ; never can we hope to see such a sight again, no language can describe it.

Of the condition of the Parthenon she writes sadly—of the discoloration caused by the Venetian bombardment, and of the defaced condition of the pediments—the slow disintegration of all that had been spared by the destructive hand of man. The latest damage had been comparatively recent, during the siege of 1827 by the Turks.

From the Propylea she found that the most beautiful view was to be seen—“ after passing

¹ Sir Richard Church, a British officer who acted as C.-in-C. to the Greek army in the war against the Turks, after which he lived out the remainder of his long life in Greece.

HOME BY THE OVERLAND ROUTE

the gateway and turning round, the marble columns forming the frame to the picture."

One vast realm of wonder spreads around,
And all the muses' tales seem truly told,
Till the sense aches with gazing, to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon.

CHAPTER XIV

*The Kingdom of Fife, 1843-47—India once more—
Ajmere, 1848—Hyderabad, 1852—Calcutta, 1853*

BY July the travellers were settled in Scotland. No news from home could have reached them for some months, and in spite of the reunion with his children, the home-coming must have been a sad one for John Low. His old mother was still alive, but the end was near. William Low had recently lost his wife, and Susan Foulis her husband, and the next mails from India brought news of the death of his favourite nephew. Of Margaret Low's death all that is known is contained in an inscription on a Memorial Tablet in Kembach Church.

... Margaret Hunter, the beloved wife of Lt. Col. Wm. Low, Madras Army, who departed this life at Wemyss Hall on the 19th May, 1843, aged forty years.

Sir David Foulis, an old and broken man, had long been painfully dying, conscientiously nursed by his wife, who, when any improvement in his condition made it possible, paid flying visits to her mother. The performance of these sad duties, however, in nowise modified her intense pre-occupation with the religious question at that time agitating Scotland. The time of the "Disruption" was at hand, and in May of this year, on the refusal by the Government of the Church's

claim to independence (based on the principle that "no Minister should be intruded into any parish against the will of the congregation"), Doctor Thomas Chalmers and more than a third of the clergy withdrew from the General Assembly,¹ subsequently forming themselves into the new Free Church of Scotland. In so doing, the 480 ministers who left the kirk gave up livings, the total income of which amounted to over £100,000 a year.

Although there were no doctrinal questions to embitter the issue, many a household in Scotland was at this time divided against itself. Among others, General Bethune and all his children stood aloof, probably repelled by the extreme and narrow views held by many of the dissenting clergy.

The peace of poor old General Foulis's last days was disturbed by the controversy, although he passed away before the crisis was reached. His attitude towards religion was summed up in an old motto which he had adopted—"Let the deed schaw," and he was very loth to leave the Established Church, fearing, moreover, that such a step might be considered disloyal towards the Government, but in the end the required promise was given—the exhortations of his strong-willed wife and her entourage prevailed.

Georgina, at Clatto, faithfully reflected her sister's attitude, and of the preceding year the tutor writes :

¹ Of the "Disruption," G. N. Trevelyan writes : "It was a great moral act & had a heightening effect on the life of Scotland, even among those who did not agree as to its necessity." (Chap. 18.)

The Patronage Act was not repealed until 1874.

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Her mother had been very ill two months before, & her reduced strength forbade them looking to her being much longer in this world.

Miss Low was a faithful witness for Christ before all, especially by placing the *truths of the Gospel* before her mother with great earnestness & affection.

From the same source Maria Bethune is reported as—

the only one in her family to have resolved to come out, but she has not yet given in her name.

The docile household staffs of both Cairnie and Clatto unanimously “declared their resolution to leave the Establishment,” but by this time S. E. Low had drifted into quiet waters, beyond the reach of anxious clamorous voices, as the most resolute of her daughters was forced to admit :

Of course my poor mother has never been spoken to on that subject, her mind being in that weakened state that it could do no good.

From a letter to John from the family lawyer on September 12th, it appears that he was suddenly summoned from Edinburgh, where he and his wife were staying, to the bedside of his mother. She died eight days later, and her body was laid beside her husband’s in the little churchyard which surrounds the older, ruined church of Kemback, perched half-way on the steep brae that lies between the village of Blebo Craigs and Dura Den.¹

The drive through that narrow dene, or “den,”

¹ About this time Dura Den attracted much notice in the scientific world from its remarkable geological formation. When the yellow sandstone was laid bare, thousands of fossil fishes; many of them unknown species, were brought to view.

is singularly lovely, though in later times to some extent disfigured by one or two factories (since derelict) ; in the days of S. E. Low's young wife-hood there had been no road running through it.

The laird of Strathvithie, now in correspondence with his eldest son (another Hugh Cleghorn) in India, attended the funeral.

Since I last wrote you I have been at the funeral of two of our oldest family friends, Mrs. Low of Clatto and Doctor Macdonald of Kemback.

The Doctor did duty at the funeral of his friend as well as he ever did in his life, but he followed her in the narrow house within ten days. She was about 84 & he about 92 years of age.

We are all grieved by seeing in the India papers the death of William Deas. This will be a very overwhelming blow to his poor mother, to whom he had always been the kindest of sons, and who will feel it the more after losing her second in the Cabul business.

The old Doctor had outlived his time ; another Zeit-Geist held the world in thrall,—a new generation had arisen, more fervent and aspiring, and infinitely more self-conscious.

For the children at Clatto, the arrival of their parents was opportune ; Georgina had long enough held undisputed sway. The Lord's Day, occupied largely in church attendance, was further honoured by the prohibition of all innocent amusement,—no books (other than the Lord's Word), no games, no music, no toys, and, unkindest cut of all—no jam !

My father, the little Malcolm of the letters, once told me of the first appearance of his brother Irvine at his aunt's matutinal bible readings at Clatto. The result was startling in the extreme ! In the midst of Georgina's lengthy exposition of the

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scriptures, that sturdy infant slipped to his feet and made for the door, throwing back over his shoulder—"Pish! I'll have no more of this," to the mingled amazement and ecstasy of his elder brethren. One or two further allusions to Clatto in the few letters of Peter Cleghorn's which have survived a somewhat ruthless destruction of old correspondence at Strathvithie, give the sole glimpses into the life of the family circle before John Low again returned to India.

Dec. 21st, 1843.

Rachel [the sister who kept house for him] spent two very pleasant days at Blebo. The General is but in indifferent health, and I think is rather breaking; he is a most exemplary character, pious without ostentation, kind to all under and about him, and discharging all the duties of life as well as it is almost possible for us to do.

The wife, too, is an excellent kind person, tho' it is a pity she should have been worried off her legs by the Free Church mania; as she is the only one of her family who has joined it, she has to go to Dairsie Moor by herself, or stay at home.

(Maria Bethune was stout, and Dairsie fully two miles farther than her parish church!)

In July of the following year William Low married again. He was now fifty-three years of age, and his wife,¹ the elder daughter of Sir James Foulis of Colinton, must have been his junior by more than a score of years. His second marriage also took place in Edinburgh, but although he himself was, and remained, a pillar of the Established Church, the wedding, in deference to the wishes of his bride's family, took place in an

¹ Thomasina Agnes, daughter of Sir James Foulis, sixth Baronet of Colinton and Woodhall.

Episcopalian church. Conscience therefore debarred attendance at the ceremony of three of his sisters, and a fourth, Charlotte Mill, went about wailing, "They won't let me attend my own brother's marriage."

She could, however, be firm on occasion, and when attacked by her sisters on the iniquity of having a "papist" as maid, replied shortly— "Marr-get suits me and I suit Marr-get," and the subject had to be regarded as *exhausted*. Like all the others, she was a woman of marked individuality which became accentuated with the years. She was beloved by the younger generation, for whom her nimble fingers would play reels by the hour, and my father always remembered the way in which she rushed in when boyish disputes were in progress with—"Ye're both *parr-tially* right, my dears."

Shortly after S. E. Low's death, Clatto, which was burdened beyond its capacity,¹ was put up for sale and bought in by my grandfather in the open market.

There are a few later references to the family in the letters of Peter Cleghorn.

Aug. 4th, 1844. . . . Col. Low is gone to the hills to shoot grouse; Mrs. Low remains at headquarters, & Miss Low takes care of some of the children for sea-bathing at St. Andrews. Mrs. Deas expects her daughter-in-law in the course of a month.

William Deas's widow brought home a little daughter, who in years to come was to be a great

¹ The mortgages were largely held by members of the family, who, on the advice of the family lawyer, foreclosed, in order that the property should be immune from further calls on account of the Fife Bank creditors.

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consolation to her grandmother. For Catherine survived the last of her children. "Little Cathey," who never recovered from the effects of smallpox, remained her mother's patient, colourless satellite to the last, but passed away eighteen years before her parent.

Sept. 21st. . . . Yesterday your friend, Lady Foulis, Miss Low, & Col. Low's three sons came over & spent the day with us. The Colonel & Mrs. Low are in England, where they have been placing Miss at school.

Col. William Low with his lady spend the winter in Italy.

A few days later he adds a postscript :

I spent a pleasant day at Clatto, where Col. & Mrs. Low had just arrived from London. Lady Foulis was there, looking remarkably well. She has sent me a very beautifully engraved portrait of Sir David.

A year later, with the detached sagacity of a neighbour, he comments on further additions in progress at Clatto :

. . . Col. Low has come into St. Andrews for the summer, as great alterations are going on, the house filled with wrights & masons.

Gen. Bethune thinks his alterations will cost £2,000 or £2,500, which, begging my friend's pardon, is very foolish. The old house was very comfortable & quite sufficient for the property.

Gen. Bethune & Mrs. Low dined with us the other night, the Colonel would not come, having had a very severe fall from a ladder. He did not feel it much at the time, but a day or two afterwards in playing at golf, he fainted from excess of pain, but the worst is now passed.

I probably mentioned in my last that Col. William Low has commenced his family by a son & heir at Rome. I hear that he is to be back in a couple of months & has taken Crawford Priory. This is an immense pile of buildings of which he will inhabit a corner, but the shooting

being the best in that part of the country is the great attraction for William.

William and his wife did not stay long at Crawford Priory,¹ but settled soon after into Cairnie Lodge, which he rented for some years.

During the four and a half years that John and Augusta remained at home, two more babies were born to her in Edinburgh, and the four boys were sent to a school in the north of England.

They sailed again in 1847, taking with them the two infants,—both daughters. Charlotte was left behind to finish her education. With the exception of Richmond² (for three years past a married man), who was at Gwalior as Assistant to Colonel Sleeman, all the Shakespear family were now in England—John on long leave, after eleven years spent at Lucknow, while Colonel Irvine and his family, including Selina, were home for good. Irvine's last appointment had been that of Superintendent of Marine, which carried with it as residence one of those cool and spacious houses at Garden Reach, with a vista of lines of stately shipping, closely moored in line, and stretching to the sea.

So near was it to the water that had one of the near vessels broken from her moorings, the bowsprit might well have pierced a window or crashed against the walls. From this house, after two years of waiting, William Ritchie's wedding had taken place.

In 1846, when Irvine sent in his resignation, the

¹ Crawford Priory, near Ladybank, Fife, then the property of George, fourth Earl of Glasgow.

² He married Marion, daughter of George Powney Thompson, Judge at Agra, in 1844.

first Sikh War was in progress. The lure of again taking part in active service was irresistible, and after making arrangements for embarking his family, he applied to be dispatched to the army of the Sutlej. He was appointed Chief Engineer to the force, but arrived on the eve of battle, and declining to supersede the officer in command, rode on the following day on Sir Hugh Gough's staff.

Before leaving India, he received a kindly letter from Sir Henry Hardinge,¹ the veteran soldier, who succeeded Lord Ellenborough when the latter was recalled after half the usual tenure of office, by the Court of Directors whose authority he had consistently flouted :

... It must ever be a satisfaction to you that you made the decision to move up to the army, leaving your family to proceed to England without you, & that you were in time to take part in the glorious victory of Sobraon.

To Selina, India had not been kind. In January 1844, the same year which later was to bring her the news of a devoted brother's tragic death in Europe, she heard that the man she cared for had fallen in the Gwalior campaign. Lieut.-Colonel Sanders, Military Secretary to Lord Ellenborough, had been an intimate friend of Richmond Shakespear's at Herat, and the mutual attachment between him and Selina was known to all the family.

At the battle of Maharajpur, Sanders volunteered to lead a charge against the enemy's guns, and fell, shot through the heart.

An express, sent by Richmond (who was himself

¹ Sir Henry Hardinge (1785-1856), Governor-General 1844-1848. Created a Viscount after the battle of Sobraon.

acting as A.D.C. to Sir Hugh Gough) to Garden Reach, was the first intimation of the battle to reach the capital.

Major Irvine did not long survive his return. Lord Auckland, who was then First Sea Lord, almost immediately appointed him Director of Works to the Admiralty, but in the winter of 1849 he sustained a severe fall in the course of an inspection at Portsmouth, and died before the year was out, leaving Marianne a widow at thirty-three, with eight children ranging in age from twelve years to three months.

* * * * *

John Low was returning to India without an appointment. His arrival at Calcutta must almost have coincided with that of the youngest—and one of the greatest Governor-Generals since Clive. Lord Dalhousie¹ was only thirty-six years of age when he took up the reins of office. A man, small of stature, autocratic and imperious from the consciousness of innate power, he exacted the utmost from himself and others, but in spite of a mordant pen (his reproofs, which cut to the quick, were always delivered in writing), he was not only feared but greatly loved.

In John Low, he inspired an unswerving devotion, although, ever jealous of native rights, he was not always in sympathy with the line of policy pursued by his great chief.

There are no family letters in existence of this period, and any details which I possess of the last

¹ James Andrew Broun Ramsay, tenth Earl and first Marquess of Dalhousie (1812-60). Governor-General 1848-56. He had married in 1836 Lady Susan Hay, daughter of the Marquess of Tweedale.

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lap of my grandfather's service, are mainly derived from a number of private letters addressed to him by Lord Dalhousie and his successor, Lord Canning.¹ With the former—with whom it is evident that much personal intercourse took place in Calcutta—the correspondence is voluminous.

Perhaps to one in so lonely and exalted a position as that of Governor-General, the great difference in age between the two men made confidential relations more possible.

They were both Lowland Scotchmen, who delighted at times to drop into the manner of speech of their homeland.

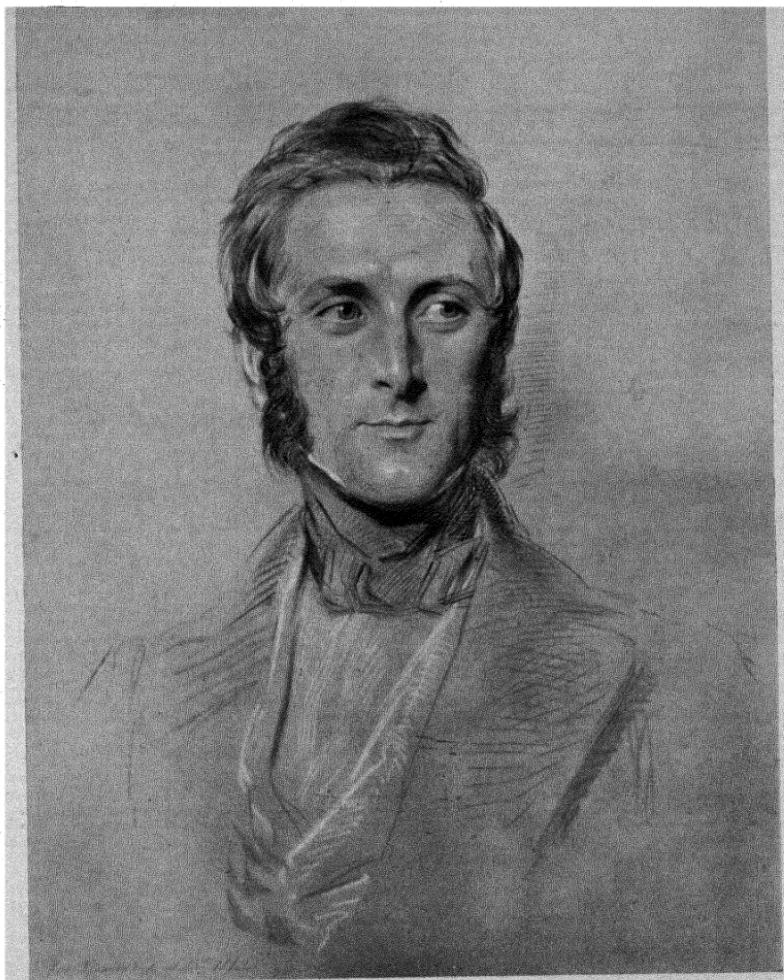
Pending a permanent appointment, John Low was sent in March to take temporary charge at Hyderabad, during the absence of General Fraser, the Resident, who was on a voyage to Penang for the benefit of his daughter's health. The following was written on arrival at Hyderabad :

28th March, 1848.

. . . I thank your Lordship for your kind enquiries. We had a most tedious journey to Masulipatam, & a very hot journey to this place, but happily neither Mrs. Low nor the children suffered anything worse than inconvenience from the heat. . . .

Affairs at the Court of the Nizam necessitated much correspondence between Calcutta and Hyderabad, but in due course General Fraser returned to his post, on which Lord Dalhousie offered my grandfather the Residency in Nepal. The Rajputana Agency had also become vacant, and he regretted not being able to offer this—

¹ These letters, with a number of others received in India between 1818 and 1858, were most kindly looked through, sorted and docketed by Colonel F. Gwatkin, D.S.O., M.C., and are now at the India Office. (Vol. 828. "Home Miscellaneous.")



JAMES ANDREW BROUN RAMSAY

10th Earl and 1st Marquess of Dalhousie

From the drawing by George Richmond in the possession of Mrs. Broun Lindsay, at Colstoun

INDIA ONCE MORE

at the expense of other officers of considerable standing, who have been serving continuously in India since your return to England. . . . I know that Katmandu is not Lucknow, but still it is better than nothing, & I can do no more than offer you the best thing I have at my disposal.

This offer was accepted, as in duty bound, but in a long letter, John Low let it be seen that, on grounds of his former services, he was deeply hurt.

. . . Although I purposely abstained from intruding upon your Lordship with any application, it so happened that I was *particularly desirous* of being Governor-General's Agent in Rajpootana, chiefly because of my long practical experience among the Rajpoots. . . .

The letter goes on to state the fact that he had been three times longer in political employ than one of the two officers (Colonel Sleeman) considered to have prior claims, that he had for six years held the post of one of the principal Rajputana Agencies, and had, under Malcolm, been both in the field and concerned with the negotiations of 1817, 1818 and 1819. Dalhousie was too great a man not to permit himself on occasion to change his mind ; he probably reflected that after thirty-eight years of service, five years of home leave constituted no ground for penalization. His reply was probably the shortest, conferring an important appointment, ever penned :

GOVT. HOUSE,
Sept. 14th, 1848.
MY DEAR COL. LOW,
If you have a mind to be a Rajpoot chief, you shall be.
Yours sincerely,
DALHOUSIE.

For the next four years Ajmere, the city situated in that portion of British India, which is like a

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tiny island, centred in the wide sea of territory that comprises the Rajput states,¹ was to be the very happy home of John Low and his wife and their two small daughters.

The second Sikh War was in progress at the time of their arrival, and the murder of Patrick Vans Agnew soon to be avenged. Lord Dalhousie himself proceeded to the Punjab, and on Christmas Day he wrote to my grandfather :

Please God the dance will be danced out correctly at last, tho' it has not been led off very satisfactorily.

And a month later :

CAMP MUKHO, *Jan. 25th, 1849.*
MY DEAR COLONEL,

. . . You will be as glad to hear as I am to tell you that Mooltan is down. As the troops were about to storm, Moolraj surrendered and his garrison, about 4,000.

The fort is a shapeless mass of ruins. It would not do to hang him now? Do you think it would? I think of sending him "across the black water."

Yours very sincerely
DALHOUSIE.

Both Augusta's brothers took part in the campaign. Richmond was on leave at Naini Tal when the news reached him; but at once volunteered for active service, arriving at Ferozepore by the end of October. John was at sea, on his way back to India, and reached Calcutta on January 6th. Sent up by dâk, he joined Sir Hugh Gough's army in time to fight with his brother at Gujerat, essentially a gunners' battle, where he and Richmond each commanded a battery of heavy artillery under Major Horsford.

¹ Ajmere-Merwara.

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The satisfaction of the home Government at the successful termination of the war, which was followed by the annexation of the Punjab, was shown by the bestowal of a step in the peerage on the Governor-General, who replied characteristically to John Low's congratulations :

July 23rd, 1849.

Many thanks to you, my dear Colonel, for your congratulations on my *Brevet*. I was very well content with the old Yerldom, but I would be ungrateful indeed if I were not deeply sensible of Her Majesty's goodness in conferring upon me this prompt and distinguished proof of her approbation of my conduct as a public man.

The many letters which passed between Government House and Ajmere during this year were still largely on the subject of Hyderabad. The Nizam was enormously in debt to Government, which was badly in need of the money, and the internal condition of his dominions was pitiable. The troops which he was bound by treaty to maintain were not only unpaid, but half-starved, a dangerous state of affairs not only for the country, but for the ruler himself, but in spite of one or two half-veiled hints from home and open pressure from the Resident, whose conduct of affairs had been unhappy from the first, Lord Dalhousie's attitude was marked by the greatest patience. In the following March he wrote to Sir John Hobhouse, President of the Board of Control :

Gen. Fraser¹ makes mountains of these mole-hills, sends me more official papers on the march of a Subadar's party of the Contingent than were produced by the battle of Waterloo, & dins into the Govt. day after day with pro-

¹ *Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, by Sir W. Lee-Warner, Vol. 2, p. 126.

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voking pertinacity his one remedy—the assumption of the Government by us, that is by himself.

For sufferers from toothache, the torture must in these days have been prolonged! In the following month John Low made urgent application for leave—

to go away at once if it should be necessary for my comfort to do so. My earnest endeavour shall be to get the Bombay dentist up to this place.

He was probably successful, for the suggestion in the following reply does not appear to have been followed :

MY DEAR COLONEL,

Go where you like, only get well again & I shall be pleased. I need not say how glad I should be if your choice fell on Simla & Mr. Blundell.

It was during this year that Charlotte joined her parents. She was very pretty and had much charm of manner, but it was a similarity of mind and outlook which constituted a special bond between her father and herself. I have spoken with some who knew her in the days of her young girlhood in Scotland, and she seems to have had a sweetness of disposition which made a lasting impression on all with whom she came in contact. Early in 1851 John Low's health began to fail; the weight of years was beginning to tell. On January 17th he writes of a long attack of fever and ague :

Although many young people at the same place who caught it were quite well apparently in the intervening days, it was very different with me, who am old. What

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with my poor wife's continued ailments (which now compel me to send her to Simla) and my old illness for two months and more, I have of late been more oppressed with low spirits and unpleasant forebodings than I have been at any time during the last twenty-five years.

He received the following reply three weeks later :

I am grieved to see you writing in so "dowie" a tone and one so very unusual with you . . . The cold weather will have restored you, I hope . . . so that it would be superfluous for me to bid you shake off your forebodings and "cock up your bonnet."

The cold weather apparently did restore them both, for it appears from a later letter of Dalhousie's that Augusta remained at Ajmere with her husband, although Charlotte had been sent to Simla.

SIMLA, *July 18th, 1851.*
MY DEAR COLONEL,

I have been living in expectation of seeing you here at some time during this summer, but I learned from Captain Shakespear [a cousin of Augusta's] last night that you do not propose to come. Why not? I should be pleased to see you before I leave India. So "gie a thocht to't." It would do you good, do Mrs. Low good, and please, I am sure, your charming daughter.

In his reply my grandfather gladly consented to come as soon as pressure of business permitted, adding :

AJMERE, *Aug. 20th, 1851.*
. . . I feel flattered and obliged and so does Mrs. Low at the very kind attention which Lady Dalhousie and your Lordship have paid my daughter. I hope she will not be spoilt by it, and I really don't apprehend it will have any such effect upon her, because in addition to having from

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infancy been blessed with a grateful and happy sort of disposition, I cannot help believing that there was much truth in a little speech made about her by an old lady neighbour of mine in Fife, who said to me: "Your dochter, Sir, has a lairge portion of gude sense for her years."

Charlotte was married at Simla on the 14th October, a month after her father joined her. She was only eighteen and he was loth to part with her, but her marriage to the nephew of his old friend, Lord Metcalfe (who had died six years before), pleased both the parents.¹ Theophilus John Metcalfe was a young man of twenty-three in the Bengal Civil Service. The bride's youngest sister, then a little girl of six, vividly recalled in her old age a memory of the wedding and her own obstreperous behaviour on the occasion !

For some weeks John Low remained in personal touch with the Governor-General before returning to his post.

In the following year an unwelcome war, forced upon the Government, added to the latter's overwhelming responsibilities, and a letter to my grandfather in June of that year gives an insight into his feelings on the subject :

... It is a detestable war, a most unwelcome episode in my Indian career, and in every point of view disgusting, and just at present too there seems to be a good opportunity both in the Deccan and Oude for doing what is for the present best suited for the circumstances of those countries, yet so hampered as I am I dare not help. . . .

But the equipment of the expedition dispatched to Burma in March had been supervised by him with all his mastery of detail, and his care for the

¹ He succeeded his father, Sir Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe, in the baronetcy in 1853.

health and comfort of the troops was described by their Commander as "parental." The war was brought to a successful conclusion, and the province of Pegu annexed in January, 1853.

Lord Dalhousie subsequently visited Burma on three occasions. In the meantime he was enlarging British India through repeated applications of the "Doctrine of Lapse," by which *dependent Hindu states* (such as had formerly been tributary to a Native Power superseded by the British, or had been created or revived by the latter) lapsed to the Paramount Power on the failure of natural heirs.

The principle was not new; in cases of such failures the sanction of Government had to be obtained¹ for the carrying out of an ancient and cherished Hindu custom, that of the adoption of an heir, and such sanction had been on many former occasions withheld.

Lord Dalhousie, in thus acting on precedent, and supported by the Home Authorities with whom he was in constant communication, felt his conscience clear in a matter in which he was no doubt biased by the pressing need of consolidating British possessions in India, and of the furtherance of his wide-embracing schemes connected with public works of all descriptions, including the inauguration of railway communication. John Low, trained in a different school, viewed the matter of "adoption" from another angle. A lifetime of experience gained through close and sympathetic contact with some of the principal races in India, had brought him a rare measure

¹ This sanction was not required for bequests of *private property or treasure*.

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of understanding, and particularly was this so with the Rajputs, who with their long pedigrees and consequent pride of race, held to feudal traditions with as much tenacity as was the case in the Scottish Highlands of earlier generations. He knew their passionate loyalties, which, unless conditions were too intolerable, led them to prefer misrule to alien rule.

In 1852 the Governor-General recommended the annexation of Kerowlee (or Kerauli), a small state in Rajputana, and on September 9th he wrote to my grandfather :

The doctrine which the Court of Directors now adopt upon adoption to the thrones are what you consider heterodox. I avow myself imbued with the heresy. . . .

Later in the same month, in answer to a letter from Ajmere (which has not been preserved) he wrote again :

September 21st. MY DEAR COLONEL, I have read your letter to-day regarding Kerowlee . . . Although the question of *right* does not appear to me in the same light in which you view it, the question of *policy* is fully open to discussion and I confess that the decided opinions you express and the representations you are in a condition, from your knowledge of the Rajpoots to make regarding the feelings to which it would give rise among them, are calculated to make a strong impression upon me. . . . My belief is that the adoption will be recognised by the Court, and I shall take the liberty of letting the Chairman know your views. With regard to your writing freely, what is the value of a life of public service if it does not entitle you to write freely upon matters entrusted to you . . . and if I did not rejoice to see that you had a sufficiently good opinion of me to state your views as freely and to enforce them as earnestly as you felt inclined to do.

I thank you truly for doing so. With regard to the

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preservation of quiet at Kerowlee, drawn on the brigade at Nusseerabad.

Kicking up a row is not the way to get a rajah of their own. . . .

He subsequently wrote again to the President of the Board of Control :

Since I wrote about Kerowlee I have received a letter from Col. Low in which he urges the *policy* of recognising the adoption so earnestly that I think it right to send you an extract from his letter . . . His views will probably incline you to the liberal views which I have anticipated the Court will take. . . .¹

The adoption, which was complicated by the fact that there were two rival candidates in the field, was finally sanctioned by the Home Authorities, but John Low was now preparing, most reluctantly, to leave Rajputana.

Before his departure he had occasion to address another very earnest letter on a more personal topic to the Governor-General.

During the course of this year Richmond Shakespear had been sent as Resident to Jodhpur, one of the Agencies subordinate to Ajmere, his transference having taken place in consequence of an affair which had caused him great unhappiness.

Fazil Khan, the faithful trooper who accompanied him on the ride to Khiva, had become a native officer in the Gwalior Contingent, and the commanding officer unfortunately had occasion to have him court-martialed, with the result that he was discharged the service. Richmond, however, believing in the man's innocence, hotly

¹ Given in Lee-Warner's *Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, Vol. 2, p. 173.

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espoused his cause, demanding an inquiry, and it was a terrible blow to him when the Court found the charges substantiated.¹

He at once requested the Brigadier to call together the officers of the garrison, and made a public apology to the Commander of the Contingent, an act which raised him in the estimation of all who knew him.

But the matter had got into the newspapers and caused much excitement, and the Governor-General, a stern disciplinarian, sent from a distance one of those devastating letters of censure, which would no doubt have been modified had he been in closer contact with the circumstances and the offender.

John Low, on Richmond's arrival at Jodhpur, at once entrusted him with a delicate and difficult mission—that of persuading the Maharajah of that state to consent to the abolition of suttee. He had himself recently returned from one of his periodical tours when the following was penned.

The Governor-General's Agent was expected to march during the cool season, while for a hill station during the hot months, Mount Abu, in the Aravalli Hills, provided one of the most beautiful climates in India :

AJMERE, Dec. 18th, 1852.

... I am this day sending to your Lordship's Government a copy of a letter addressed two days ago to Sir Richmond Shakespear, expressing the satisfaction of Govt. with the Rajah of Joudpore for prohibiting the murder of widows . . . & I am thus led to beg your

¹ Characteristically, Richmond's interest in his former retainer did not cease with his conviction of his guilt and he found means to help him to employment.

AJMERE

Lordship to bear with me for telling you (in this private manner) that I have been surprised & sadly disappointed at finding the wording of Mr. Allen's letter such, that although I was instructed to give praise to the *Rajah*, I was totally precluded from adding a single word to the *Political Agent*, without whose tact & firmness the prohibition most certainly would not have been signed at all.

I regret very much that his merit in doing it was left unnoticed, because I feel that a few words of praise & encouragement in a despatch from the Governor-General in Council . . . would have had a considerable effect in soothing his still lacerated spirit.

I saw him for several days last month when passing through a part of the Joudpore territories, & it was evident to me that his feelings are still subjected to severe stings when he thinks of his removal from Gwalior & your Lordship's censures . . . having both been proclaimed to the wide world, owing to Mr. Henry Elliot's letter having found its way into the public newspapers. . . . I trust that you will kindly excuse my mentioning these circumstances to your Lordship, which I mention—I confess it—in the earnest hope that your Lordship will generously avail yourself of any proper occasion that may offer towards restoring a high-minded and meritorious officer to his former tone of feeling as regards his supposed position in the estimation of the Indian British public, but more especially the army. . . .

In the following year Lord Dalhousie published a Minute, in which he stated :

I have every confidence in the ability, the honour and the character of Sir Richmond Shakespear, and I should be glad to indicate this feeling publicly by gazetting him to officiate at Nepal.

The Nepal appointment, however, did not after all fall vacant, and although in 1854 he was again offered Gwalior, Richmond, who had become interested in his work, preferred to remain at Jodhpur. John Low, pending the arrival of his

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successor, now arranged to transfer his responsibilities to George Lawrence,¹ Resident at Mewar.

Before taking up his new appointment it was necessary for him to go to Calcutta for conference. He had received the following from Lord Dalhousie, in whose opinion the hour had struck for having affairs at the Court of the Nizam placed on a more satisfactory footing :

GOVT. HOUSE, Nov. 30th/52. "Confidential."

MY DEAR COLONEL, A few days ago I received General Fraser's resignation of the Residency of Hyderabad, in consequence of the death of his elder brother. The post is at all times one of high distinction, of difficulty and importance. At the present moment the office is enhanced by the delicate and critical position of the Nizam's affairs in relation to the British Govt.

In these circumstances, my Colleagues in the Council have unanimously concurred with me that you are the fittest man in India by far to fill the office. . . . I have some fear that the limited period during which you propose to remain in India will probably disincline you to accept the offer of Hyderabad.

But I attach so much value to your services there, & I found upon them so sanguine a hope that by their aid I may save this foolish old man from his folly, that I would earnestly beg of you, as a personal favour to myself while at the head of this Govt., not less than upon the score of the public interest, to consent to your appointment to the Residency of Hyderabad. . . .

I will not anticipate, after what I have said, anything from your personal friendship, & above all from your public spirit, but an assent to my proposal.

I would therefore beg of you to repair to Calcutta for conference as soon as you can.

With reference to Kerowlee, I think it would be well to hand over the Rajputana Agency to a man of action, perhaps George Lawrence this time.

However choose for yourself.

¹ George St. Patrick Lawrence 1804-84, elder brother of Sir Henry Lawrence.

John Low regretted very keenly leaving Rajputana, but such a letter could evoke but one response. In his acknowledgment of it, which he describes as being "far more flattering than I deserve," he says :

... Before I had read through your letter I had fully & finally resolved to go, & to do my utmost to give satisfaction to your Lordship.

What has puzzled me on this occasion are such querries as these—viz.—whether I ought to send my wife & children home at once, with whom I intended to pass the hot weather at Mount Aboo, & from whom I hoped never again to be separated in this world, or whether I might make the venture of taking them with me to Hyderabad. But Doctor —— declared there would be no danger for Mrs. Low to pass the next hot weather at Hyderabad, and I have made up my mind to send immediately to Col. Lawrence and start for Calcutta.

The tension between Henry and John Lawrence in the administration of the newly annexed Punjab had at this time become acute, although it did not lessen the mutual affection of the two brothers. They both appealed to the Governor-General, who elected to retain the younger brother, with whom he had always had relations of perfect harmony, and Henry, in a rather pathetic letter, applied for Hyderabad :¹

... I did not think of addressing your Lordship on the subject of Hyderabad, but as my brother has sent my notes, I beg to explain that though I prefer this frontier to any other part of India, there is so much that is unpleasant in my position in reference to my brother, that I would willingly make way for him should your Lordship be disposed to appoint me to Hyderabad.

¹ This letter and the following extract are given in *Lawrence of Lucknow*, by Professor J. L. Morrison (Chap. XI, p. 251).

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John Lawrence therefore remained at Lahore as Chief Commissioner, and Lord Dalhousie, in a kindly letter, offered Henry the other important appointment just vacated by John Low :

... Rajputana in your hands will have the same salary as Hyderabad, and the political jurisdiction such, I believe, as accords with your inclinations.

Ajmere, however, under its Commissioner, was not included in his jurisdiction, which he appears to have regarded as a grievance, but the permission accorded to him to make Mount Abu his headquarters did much to restore his shattered health. Richmond Shakespear was therefore once more thrown into contact with an old friend, with whom he had many dealings both private and official, and his home letters occasionally allude to the hasty temper and subsequent generous apologies of his irascible, but lovable Chief.

During John Low's stay in the capital, Lady Dalhousie sailed for home. A woman of a gentle, home-loving disposition, she had been her husband's greatest comfort and support, and in spite of long-continued ill-health, she contrived to fulfil every duty to the last.

She embarked at Garden Reach on January 23rd, 1853, for the return by the long sea route, intending to spend some months with her young daughters, and to return to India in the autumn. Lord Dalhousie, left desolate by her absence, was yet sanguine as to her complete recovery. He was just starting on his first visit to Burma, and from board ship, on February 17th, he wrote a long letter to John Low, amplifying instructions given in conference, on the new Treaty which he

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wished to make with the Nizam, whose debt to Government now exceeded £440,000, but who was to be offered generous terms.

The negotiations followed the tortuous course peculiar to Oriental diplomacy—more familiar in practice to the new Resident than to his Chief, who, on his return from Burma, sent a constant fire of letters to Hyderabad.

Govt. House, *May 26th*. . . . The proceedings of the Nizam are very discreditable to him, and the man has shown greater capacity than he has hitherto got credit for ; the more discreditable is his present dishonest shuffling. I am not disposed to be trifled with, nor shall I allow myself to be . . . You have a troublesome business in hand.

May 28th. MY DEAR Low, I have received to-day your letter of the 16th and lose no time in assuring you of the pleasure I have derived from the very agreeable surprise it contained . . . Not forgetting the slips that there are twixt the cup and the lip, I will not actually congratulate you on your success lest I should have to recant.

If you should succeed, as you now anticipate, in obtaining the draft treaty you enclose, you will very far have exceeded my expectations and will have rendered a very distinguished service to the Govt. . . .

The following, penned two days later, acknowledges a letter from Hyderabad announcing that the negotiations were successfully concluded :

. . . My eyes opened on your treaty, which arrived during the night, and a most welcome day-star it was. I congratulate you with all my heart on your speedy and great success in concluding a treaty which is favourable to all parties.

An official dispatch followed :

. . . That the negotiations have been brought to a prosperous issue, the Governor-General in Council believes

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to be due to your personal exertions and qualities. It is to your ability, to your perseverance, to your rare combination of suavity of temper with firmness of determination that his Lordship in Council attributes all our success.

It was gratefully acknowledged, and on June 25th Lord Dalhousie wrote :

... The words were very sincerely uttered. I rejoice to know that you consider them adequate.

By the provisions of the treaty, certain districts, including the Berars, were ceded to the Government, which undertook to establish and maintain a new auxiliary force in place of the old Contingent, and the Nizam was relieved of his enormous debt.

It is apparent from an earlier letter from Government House that at the Court of this old ruler there was also a masterful lady to be reckoned with :

June 9th. ... The vellum Treaties were signed & despatched by express. ... The Dewan & the old Begum both timed their departure very judiciously. A few days earlier they would have played the mischief with the treaty.

The ratification was celebrated with some pomp ; the Governor-General's letter was read in open durbar, and the Nizam was reported as being "unusually good-humoured, and even facetious in his remarks."

John Low's time at Hyderabad was drawing to a close. On July 4th, Lord Dalhousie wrote to impart important news : "you will be glad to hear that I have been able to declare the Burmese War at an end . . .," the letter concluding :

HYDERABAD

... I am delighted & feel confident that I might congratulate you on being a Member of Council. Lest I should bring you bad luck, I will not congratulate you prematurely, but I feel quite certain of it, & its confirmation by the next mail will give pleasure to none of your innumerable friends more than to myself, whom I am sure you reckon among the number.

This information was not quite unexpected, for letters of the preceding month had given him to understand that when a vacancy occurred the Court of Directors would appoint him to a seat on the Council—letters which from the middle of that month were edged with a deep mourning border.

On June 13th a telegram reached Calcutta with the news that Lady Dalhousie had died at sea within sight of England. It was broken to the unsuspecting husband on his return in good spirits from his evening drive by his cousin and Military Secretary, Captain Ramsay. The scene is one of the most pathetic recorded in history. The blow was shattering. For two days the Governor-General shut himself into his room, and when he emerged, he said that the light of his life had gone out, and called for work and more work, as the only anodyne for his pain. Although expressing his gratitude for the letters of sympathy with which he was deluged, he could not bring himself to speak of his loss.

In correspondence with John Low, the subject at this time is only referred to in one brief p.c.:

June 25th.

For your private letter of the same date, my dear friend, I thank you.

The Hyderabad appointment, described as

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being "greatly increased in importance through a new treaty with the Nizam," was now offered to Henry Lawrence, and to Dalhousie's surprise declined. Health considerations played a great part in the refusal; Lady Lawrence had long been ill, and she died at Mount Abu in January of the following year.

It was a clash of temperaments, and not inability to recognize the qualities of one of the greatest of his lieutenants, which made harmonious relations difficult between the two men, a point that is illustrated in a letter received by John Low from Lord Dalhousie in August, 1855, at which time there was some tension between Sir Henry and some of his subordinates in Rajputana, which he had apparently confided to the former:

I re-enclose Lawrence's letter. I have received another letter from him direct . . . I assured him that his authority should be fully supported. *He has a very odd, through ither way of doing business.* . . .

On the occasion of this journey to Calcutta, a Government steamer could not be dispatched for John Low as before to Masulipatam. "One of the two," Dalhousie writes, "is at the bottom; Feroze [the other] is crippled, and so are we." This was in allusion to increasing lameness resulting from an injury sustained on one of his tours, and from which he never recovered. Augusta does not appear to have accompanied her husband. She was probably with her eldest daughter at Simla, who, for the second time, was expecting a child.

Exactly a year before, the Governor-General had written to Charlotte's father:

CALCUTTA

... I was grieved to learn from Metcalfe of your daughter's disappointment. Poor soul—it is a sad business for young mothers and shakes their health. However, in that climate she will soon be restored.

In a small packet of private letters at Clatto were two, enclosed in a tiny black-edged envelope and evidently cherished, for their contents are noted on the cover. The first of these is a greeting on arrival :

GOVT. HOUSE, Sept. 21st, 1853, 2 p.m.

MY DEAR LOW,

The "Hugh Lindsay" is telegraphed and I wish to bid you welcome. If you have not made other engagements, you will find rooms ready for you in this house.

If you have, don't stand upon any ceremony. There shall be a council to swear you in. If you have got yr smart coat, put it on—if not, never mind. Once again you are welcome.

Yrs sincerely

DALHOUSIE.

The second was written a fortnight later :

What can I say to you, my dear friend, but that my heart, sore with the worst agony that the spirit of man can suffer, aches for you again in this afflicting loss of your most sweet child, and can enter into all the depths of your sorrow with you.

May the great God comfort you with the thought that her spirit is now in bliss before his throne, waiting for that re-union wh. we all look and long for. Do not think of Council. You have no occasion either to ask leave or to give any cause for it to anybody.

All will know and all will deeply lament the cause, none more than

Your sincere friend,

DALHOUSIE.

Charlotte Metcalfe had died at Simla on the 26th September, eighteen days after the birth of

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her son.¹ It was the greatest sorrow of her father's life ; for his four young sons, all destined for India, he had hoped much too, when his time of service should be over, from their sister's watchful care and affection, and in letters, which I have seen, which passed between his son-in-law and himself, his usual reticence broke down and he gave full vent to his grief.

¹ Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Bart., 1853-1928.

CHAPTER XV

Annexations—Nagpur, 1854—Oudh, 1856. Dalhousie's Departure

In the four and a half years which remained to John Low in Calcutta, a once familiar figure was lacking. His brother Henry had moved farther east. It appears, from a letter written by Lord Dalhousie in April, 1855, that my grandfather had then returned from a visit to Burma.

... I was very heartily glad to receive yr letter of the 25th ultimo, my dear Low, & to learn from it that your trip to Rangoon had been of essential benefit to you. . . .

Embedded in a mass of manuscript papers at Clatto was a single sheet of the *Bengal Hurkaru* of September 17th, 1855; there seemed no special reason why it should have been thus preserved, but the first column bears the heading—"A Few Facts from Pegu," and the opening lines are as follows :

Our letters bring us a few trustworthy statements from Pegu. Major Phayre with his suite were already beyond the British boundary, & expected to reach Ava by the 25th August.

Everywhere they seem to have been received with the most cordial respect. At Maloon, the first large town beyond the boundary, *they were received by the Governor of the district, apparently a Scotchman, who with the national*

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ability has risen thus high in the service of the Burmese Court. . . .

Could this have been Henry?—and did he at last make good in an independent capacity in a new country? I do not know. All that is recorded of him is a brief notice in some family papers:

Henry Malcolm Low, died April 5th, 1858, at Meadi Pegu, unmarried.

These years were strenuous ones for the Government in India. At the outbreak of the Crimean War, Lord Dalhousie, fearing dangerous repercussions, for the second time consented to prolong his tenure of office, although his health was in a most precarious condition.

His elder daughter, Lady Susan Ramsay, joined her father in December, 1854, and her gentle and affectionate companionship brought some rays of sunshine into his overshadowed life.

In the early part of that year the large and important state of Nagpur was taken over by the Government. The Rajah had died without issue, and without adopting an heir. His widows however—a recognized custom—desired to do so, and their claim was supported by the Resident, Mr. Mansel.

On January 28th, the Governor-General, in a lengthy Minute, was able to prove that Nagpur was a dependent state and recommended its annexation.

In reply to a private letter from my grandfather, he expressed his convictions on February 2nd.

ANNEXATION OF NAGPUR

... I heartily echo your concurrence in the Duke's ¹ dictum that the Gwalior should not tempt us to a breach of faith. If I thought there was the *slightest breach of faith* in taking Nagpore, I would sooner have cut off my right hand than sign the Minute proposing it.

But for John Low, holding as unalterably other convictions, the painful moment had come when he felt constrained to oppose the Governor-General's views in Council, his representations having on this occasion no effect.

The annexation was sanctioned by the Home Authorities, but the Court of Directors, working in collaboration with, and ultimately subordinate to the Parliamentary Board of Control, had long ceased to be an independent body, and its proceedings were liable to be subjected to the icy blasts of parliamentary debates.

Three years later, in the great debate on India, of July 27th, 1857, Disraeli, in a lengthy speech introducing the proposal that a Royal Commission should be constituted to inquire into Indian grievances, condemned in retrospect the whole policy of annexation, and in particular that of Nagpur.

The storm had burst, and there was a revulsion of feeling which eventually led to a greater consideration for native sentiment, but this was not until both points of view had been to some extent reconciled, and the protected system with its fatal corollary of "non-interference" had been superseded by a wiser policy of centralized control, whereby, in cases of grave necessity, pressure could be brought to bear on the rulers of the Native States of India.

¹ The Duke of Wellington.

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At the moment, the nation in its agony and wounded pride, seeking wildly to affix the blame, failed to realize what has since been made abundantly clear—that no annexation, excepting that of Oudh, which was inevitable, played any part in starting a conflagration ignited by a simpler and more potent factor—that of widespread terror at the suspected forced violation of religious precepts.

On the subject of Lord Dalhousie's annexations,¹ in particular that of Nagpur, Disraeli, on this occasion, read to the House a portion of the Minutes made by my grandfather in Council :²

... Our Resident at the Court protested against the annexation, & the Governor-General was opposed by the ablest of his Council when he proposed it, among others by General Low, whose name is known to many members of this House.

I have no personal acquaintance with him. I can only form my opinion of him from public report, & by reading that which shews the ability & the integrity of the man—the Minutes made by him in Council.

But I may say that he has always been considered as one of our first Indian statesmen. He is a man who has risen by his own energies & merits. He has passed fifty years as the representative of the Indian Government at various Courts of India—with Mahomedan Sultans, Hindoo Rajahs, & Mahratta Princes, & he is supposed to be more familiar with the wants of India & the life of India than any other Indian statesman of the day. . . .

¹ Lord Curzon's views on this subject are of interest :

" Personally I hold that the annexation of Oudh, as of the Punjab & Pegu, was right & inevitable, & that the native state policy of Lord Dalhousie, which was rightly reversed by Lord Canning, was wrong. But his own motives in both cases were impeccable, & dictated by considerations, not of personal egotism & aggrandisement, but of broad Imperial policy."—*British Government in India* (Vol. 2, p. 220).

² Hansard, Vol. 147, pp. 453, 454, 455.

ANNEXATION OF NAGPUR

What says General Low? . . .

“ . . . When I was in Rajpootana there never was any unpleasant remark made respecting the annexation of the Punjaub. Some said Duleep Singh was an unlucky youth in having bad counsellors, but no one ever said the British Government acted with injustice in annexing that country . . . , they seemed perfectly to understand that an invasion of our territories entitled us, according to the ordinary course of human affairs, both to repel the invader & to seize his territory.

“ But every person who mentioned the subject to me held totally different languages with regard to the annexation of Satara¹ . . .

“ They did not make use of many words, my own situation being one of authority over them, but what they did say, & their manner of saying it, showed very clearly that they thought it a case of might against right. . . .

“ It is remarkable that every native who ever spoke to me respecting the annexation, asked precisely the same question—‘ What crime did the Rajah commit that his country should be seized by the Company? ’ . . . ”

With what genuine reluctance John Low expressed views which were in direct opposition to those held by Dalhousie, is shown by the following passage from his Minutes, also given on this occasion to the House.

After a very careful perusal of the Governor-General’s Minute on this important subject—it is with feelings of sincere regret that I find it quite out of my power to arrive at the same conclusions as his Lordship, . . . & I can truly add that I write this Minute with great reluctance, for it vexes me that it should be my duty to express on an important subject sentiments which are opposed to those of a statesman, whose great talents, whose eminent public services, & whose whole character I view with genuine admiration & respect.

That these feelings were also expressed in a

¹ The state of Satara had been annexed in 1849.

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private letter to the Governor-General is apparent from the following generous reply :

GOVERNMENT HOUSE

Feb. 24th, 1854.

MY DEAR LOW,

I value truly every kind word in your friendly letter. And for God's sake, my dear Friend, don't speak & don't feel as if it were undue familiarity to call yourself my personal friend.

Consider what a solitary position is that of a Governor-General—sent to perpetual Coventry by the greatness of his position, unless there are some whom he may feel to be his real friends.

Above all think of the horrible aggravation of my fate, & do not be deterred by my present official rank from holding the familiar intercourse & familiar language which are perfectly consistent even with our present position, & which will be the signs of our natural relations when we shall return, as I hope we soon shall, to our far happier position as two Scottish gentlemen on the banks of Forth.

With regard to Nagpur, tho' I am sorry we do not agree, I had a thousand times rather see you fight your convictions out, than see you write "I concur," when I know you do not. . . .

In the following year, Lord Dalhousie's health was so bad that he was strongly advised by the doctors to return to England, but affairs were critical both in Europe and India and he refused to desert his post. To John Low he wrote— " Beware of the one year more," but he took no heed to himself. For him to remain in Calcutta was however impossible, and it was decided that he should pass some months in the bracing climate of the Nilgiri Hills.

During these months, while separated at a great distance from his Council, he transacted an enormous amount of business. Soon after his arrival, the welcome news reached him from Sir

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John Lawrence that long-protracted negotiations had resulted in a Treaty of Friendship, signed at Peshawar, between the Government and the (in every sense) ancient enemy, Dost Mahommed, a treaty which was to prove of inestimable value in the stormy years to come, and affairs in Burma necessitated heavy correspondence between Coonoor and Calcutta.

The question of Oudh now loomed large on the horizon. The reigns of the kings of that country were short ! Amjad Ali Shah, like the "respectable old man," his father, had lived for only five years after being placed on the "gaddi," and the present ruler was as disreputable a specimen of his race as Nasir-ud-din Hyder, while the country was in a far more pitiable condition than during the latter's reign.

Colonel James Outram was now Resident at Lucknow ; he had recently succeeded Colonel Sleeman, who held the appointment between 1849 and 1854.

Both men were consistently averse to unnecessary interference with native rulers, but both had come to the conclusion that the state of affairs called for strong action.

Outram was therefore called upon to submit a report to Government, and it was transmitted from Calcutta to Lord Dalhousie by John Low, who concurred in Outram's views—"in words weighty from their author's long experience as Resident at Lucknow, as well as from his individual leanings in favour of Native States,"¹ reaching its destination on the 1st of May.

It drew an appalling picture. The administra-

¹ *The Garden of India*, by H. C. Irwin (Chap. V).

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tion of the country was corrupt throughout ; the "Garden of India" was laid waste and its five millions of inhabitants relentlessly exploited.

No person of respectability had access to the King. Wajid Ali Shah shut himself up in the female apartments of his palace in the exclusive company of eunuchs and singers, and the worst oppressors of the people were the servants of the State. One of these, a certain Raja Rughur Singh, had committed—

wholesale cold-blooded massacres & plunderings, besides torturing to death of human beings to an extent which could not be believed were the facts not so fully established.¹

Entire villages were destroyed and their inhabitants sold into slavery in an insensate lust for plunder.

It was felt that the continuance of such a régime was intolerable, and the Court of Directors called for a reasoned survey of the situation from the Indian Government.

Lord Dalhousie had been requested to see the matter through before laying down the reins of office. It was an onerous task. The proved loyalty of the Nawabi of Oudh to the Paramount Power and a clause in the treaty made by Lord Wellesley in 1801 to the effect that reforms must be carried out "by the King's own officers" made direct annexation difficult. It had, however, become imperative that the entire administration should be taken over by the Government. In June, the Governor-General dispatched a lengthy Minute for the consideration of his four

¹ Outram's Report, given in Lee-Warner's *Life of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (Vol. 2, p. 320).

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colleagues in Council, suggesting different modes by which the essential transfer of power could be accomplished. To the most direct course—that of the unqualified incorporation of the country in British India, he put forward three alternatives, i.e. that the King should retain his royal status, although vesting in perpetuity the administration of the country to the British Government; that he should do so for a limited time only, or that the entire control should be handed over to the Resident.

The two senior Members, Mr. Dorin and Mr. Grant, were for annexation pure and simple—Mr. Peacock, the legal Member, discussed the question from the legal aspect, concurring in practical annexation, and John Low recorded his opinion that the Oudh Government was—"so thoroughly & inveterately corrupt that there was no remedy left but the exclusive, permanent & direct assumption of the country by the Company," but he protested against a suggestion which was made of withdrawing the Resident and troops from Lucknow as a means of coercion, knowing well that the result would be a shambles.

The letters received by him during these months from the Governor-General, who was awaiting with anxiety a decisive reply from London to his Minute of the 18th June—a reply that was long delayed—contain many allusions to the issue now pending.

There had been no improvement in the latter's health. On June 15th he wrote :

... I am still weak & lame, & shall never come round in India, even if I should do so anywhere else.

They seemed deterred by the uncertainty wh. prevails

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at home from selecting my successor. I have not gained an inkling of him.

You will find that when my Oude Minute comes to you that . . . I have made use of your allusion to Saudut Ali Khan in your letter.

The latter came in very pat for the letter I was writing, & I hope you will have no objection to my having used its substance, wh. I have done without referring to your name.

Susan has been well & merry since we reached these hills. She wishes to be remembered to you. . . .

There must have been a very friendly relationship between this gentle young girl, whose life was so wholly devoted to her father, and the fast-ageing man, who not long before had lost his own daughter, for in every letter she sent him greetings.

His second boy Robert, the first of the sons to reach India, had now been gazetted to the 9th Bengal Cavalry, and was almost at once swept into the first of his many campaigns—the bloody rebellion of the Santal tribes.

The following letters refer to his arrival. He was young-looking even for his years; at the age of sixteen he had been duly entered as a Cornet in the Indian Army, and when prancing round the dining-room table at Clatto on the arrival of some of his accoutrements was pursued by an ancient maid, shrieking: “Tak awa Maister Robert’s sword.”

KOTIGHERY,

June 28th, 1855.

MY DEAR LOW,

I have to thank you for your letters of the 17th & for Mrs. Low’s message. I am glad to hear a good account of the laddie himself. As for “working very hard” it wd. be too much to expect it of a gay lad of seventeen in the first year he mounts the cockade & spurs.

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... The Oude Minute is on its way to you. You will detect where I made use of your remarks.

We are all of one mind on the main point, I know, & I hope you will soon be able to send your opinions to the Court, as they will of course wait for them, & some early decision at home is very desirable. . . .

I rejoice to hear that you are holding out well.

I hear nothing from England either of the new G.-G. or the new C.-in-C. . . .

KOTIGHERRY,

Aug. 25th, 1855.

... I am much obliged by the copies of Oude Minutes which you send me. The expressions of feelings & opinions contained in a Minute by you, whose personal sentiments & whose long local experience are so well known to the Court, will have great weight.

I observe what you say about the sweeping condemnation in Dorin's Minute, of all Kings of Oude, past, present & future. I hope you did not think that my Minute was open in any degree to the objection of containing an *undiscriminating* judgment on Oude affairs.

I should have been very glad to have heard more of your views regarding this Santhal outbreak.

It is a very distressing occurrence in its effects & has given me, sitting here at a distance, a good deal of anxiety & annoyance.

I hope your laddie will not be taken prisoner by fever—our worst enemy just now. . . .

There were to be no future Kings of Oudh ; Wajid Ali Shah was the last of the Lucknow Nawabi.

The Governor-General returned to Calcutta in November, but not until midnight of January 2nd did the long-awaited dispatch from the Court of Directors reach him.

It was decisive. It declared that "the British Government has no alternative left but to declare the violated treaty of 1801 wholly dissolved," but the manner in which the surrender of the

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administration was to be accomplished was left to Lord Dalhousie's discretion, and he chose the most merciful course possible.

Colonel Outram was sent to Lucknow with the offer of a new treaty to the King, whereby, on condition of voluntary submission, he was to be allowed to retain his royal titles, and to have full jurisdiction (the death penalty excepted) in the two royal parks of Dilkushar and Bibiapur. In addition to a large pension, money was also to be allocated for the maintenance of the palace guards.

The offer was refused. The occasion was not without pathos, and the interview for Outram must have been most painful.

Nothing was omitted to heighten the impression ; the guns were dismounted and the guard of honour disarmed. The King himself, uncovering, placed his turban in Outram's hands, declaring that he was in the hands of the British Government, and that, stripped as he was of position and honour, he was incapable of entering into any fresh negotiations. For such an eventuality everything had been prepared, and on February 7th, at the expiry of a three-days' ultimatum, the proclamation of annexation with which Outram had been furnished was published.

Probably more painful than this interview with the worthless King, was one which Colonel Outram had had a few days earlier with the Queen-Mother.

It was another case of the "grey mare," but the lady in question was a sympathetic as well as a decided character.¹

¹ It is her character that is portrayed in Knighton's *Eastern Queen*.

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By Colonel Sleeman she had been regarded with respect. Accompanied by another son and a grandson, she now bravely determined to cross the seas and plead the cause of Wajid Ali Shah in London—a fruitless errand, and at the outbreak of the Mutiny they went over to Paris, where she died.

The ex-King took up his residence in a fine house with extensive grounds at Garden Reach. As a precautionary measure he was removed during the Mutiny years to Fort William, after which he returned to his palace at Garden Reach, where he died in 1887, having lived to a much greater age than was customary in his family.

It is possible that a reduced income resulted in an increased sobriety of life ! His pension of 12 lakhs (£120,000) a year was no mean one, but from an account of his *ménage*, given in a Bengal paper in 1864, it was barely adequate to one of his prodigal inclinations.

In this account he is reported, like certain earlier European monarchs not exactly beloved by their subjects, as being much taken up with the exercise of his religious devotions. His hobby—an inherited one—was the collecting of wild animals, and in the matter of purchases for his menagerie he appears to have been fleeced by his attendants to an unheard-of extent.

On one occasion, having been induced to part with a sum equivalent to £5,000 for a pair of vultures, it is not surprising that he had subsequently had to resort to breaking up one of two golden bedsteads—historic heirlooms, which he had brought with him from Lucknow.

On the 28th of the same month that had wit-

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nessed his last great annexation, Lord Dalhousie presided for the last time in Council.

There had been divergence of opinion within those walls, but as the senior Member, Mr. Dorin, reminded his colleagues, not one angry word had ever passed between them. It must have been a solemn and pathetic moment when their President, in his farewell address, said to them :

Before the sun shall have set to-day, the power which I have so long wielded will have passed away from my hands.

His reign was over, and it had been as a king that he had been regarded by British and natives alike throughout the length and breadth of India. In all departments of the administration he left behind him a record which is unsurpassed, and had some of his urgent recommendations, notably those concerned with the increase and change of distribution of British troops in India, not been disregarded, the history of the Mutiny would have run into fewer chapters.

But his genius included a side that was very human ; few of those with whom he was in any close contact, but had occasion to realize the keen and kindly interest he took in them and their affairs, and his responsive and sensitive kindness to all who were in trouble.

Attended by his aide-de-camp, during his whole term of office, he had faithfully represented his sovereign at services in the Calcutta cathedral.

On his last Sunday, as a private individual, he felt himself free to worship after the manner of his fathers.

Too weak to walk, he was carried in his chair

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to the gallery of St. Andrew's kirk, and in a letter to the Minister, enclosing a cheque for his poor, he referred touchingly to "your service of yesterday, most impressive & beautiful to me who have been so long absent from it."

His successor, Lord Canning, was sworn in on the 29th, and he remained for one week longer in order to talk over with him and his former colleagues in the Council the pressing questions affecting India at the moment.

The attempted cheers died away, and it was in mournful silence that the assembled multitudes watched that small, crippled but indomitable figure hobble painfully on crutches to the river-side for his departure from Indian shores.

From three letters received by John Low in the summer of this year, it appears that he himself left India very shortly after Dalhousie's departure, evidently from failure of health. It was now easy to pay a flying visit to the old country, when the journey could be accomplished in nine or ten weeks. The little daughters—now eleven and twelve years old, had been for some time at school in England. The home journey had done Dalhousie's health no good, and the jolting of the springless vans crossing the desert had been torture for his crippled leg.

EDINBURGH, June 28th, 1856.

MY DEAR LOW,

I rejoice to hear of your arrival in England safe, tho' I fear we cannot say sound. . . .

My good friend Mr. Marjoribanks, painted rather too highly *couleur de rose* my prospects of early recovery. . . . In the meantime I am very lame, far more so than when we parted at Calcutta, & moveable only on crutches.

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Your account of Outram¹ I am glad to think is better than some we have had. Next month I shall be in London for a few days. In the meantime I should be glad of a line to say how you are getting on.

With kind regards to Mrs. Low, & Susan's to you, . . .

The next was sent from London which he was shortly leaving to pay a visit to his wife's family :

July 30th.

. . . Your letter from Edin^r. followed me here & it vexed me exceedingly to find from it that you had a needless trip to Grantown in search of me. You will be glad to hear that they think well of my progress. I shall be glad to hear that the " kingdom " does as much for you, & I hope you will send me a line to Yester, Haddington to tell me how you find yourself. . . .

The last was one of farewell, from Arrochar, recommended on account of the milder climate.

They had met at least once in the interval, and John Low was about to start on his return journey to India.

Sept. 2nd, 1856.

. . . I have this moment received your letter, & hope that this may reach Edinburgh early enough to save you a bootless errand to the Castle [Dalhousie Castle]. I have no hope of being able to get into it until next spring as the masons are to be at work upon it directly, & I am myself wandering in search of health on the Western coast.

My search has become more urgently necessary since I saw you last month. . . . In all August I have been suffering from tic in the head & I have not yet succeeded in shaking it off.

It is very agreeable to me to hear that you are mending tho' but slowly. I sincerely hope that your return to

¹ Outram was obliged to come home this year on account of illness, but he returned to India in time to command the expedition sent to Persia in the following spring.

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India may not be injurious to you, & that, following prudent counsels you will return early next year to enjoy the rest you have earned so well.

It is a great disappointment to me not to see you before your departure . . . Good Luck go with you.

A letter from one whose friendship he valued above all others, must have followed John Low to India. Mountstuart Elphinstone, who twice since his retirement had been offered the Governor-Generalship, and who fifteen years before had finished his *History of India*, was now in his eightieth year, but in spite of enfeebled health he was as keenly interested as ever in the affairs of that country. The new and—as it proved—the last Charter granted to the East India Company in the last part of Dalhousie's term of office had embodied some momentous changes.

HOOKWOOD, LIMPSFIELD,
BY GODSTONE,
Oct. 5th, 1856.

MY DEAR LOW,

If anything could have reconciled me to the disappointment of my hopes of meeting you, it would have been the feelings expressed in your letter from Southampton . . .

Besides an infinity of subjects which derived their interest from what may be called a former age, I was very desirous of talking to you on some of those belonging to the present day.

The events that had taken place in our position, foreign & domestic in India, together with the changes in men's minds, both native & European, had fixed the last renewal of the Charter as an epoch from which we were to begin a new (illegible)—on principles suited to our altered position, & you were exactly the person from whom I should have expected to get the fullest information & the soundest opinion on our situation & prospects.

After alluding to his correspondent's intention

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of finally retiring in the following spring, he continues :

It gives me also a better chance of another meeting ¹ with you as your absence is to be measured by months instead of years, as it would have been if you had determined to serve out your time in Council.

With the warmest wishes for your complete recovery & safe return,

Believe me,

Yours ever most sincerely,

M. ELPHINSTONE.

¹ Elphinstone died in November of the following year.

CHAPTER XVI

Mutiny Days, 1857

THREE was to be no return in the following year for John Low and his wife. They had only been settled in Calcutta for a short time, when at Barrackpur was heard the first muttering of the storm which burst so terribly at Meerut on the 10th of May.¹ The following day, their work accomplished, the mutineers surged into Delhi, twenty-five miles distant, and before evening fell, every European in the Imperial City was either dead or a fugitive.

News took long to travel and for many weeks my grandparents must have trembled for the fate of their little grandson.

Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, at that time Magistrate of Delhi—"a brave and resolute man, who ever in the midst of danger seemed almost to bear a charmed life," paid an early visit to the magazine to inform Lieutenant Willoughby that mutinous cavalry were about to cross the river, and to borrow a couple of guns in order to attempt to defend the bridge.²

¹ The fate of some unfortunate Europeans and Eurasians in the commercial quarter was delayed. They were mostly women. They were imprisoned, and barbarously murdered a few days later, by the direct orders, it was said, of one of the Delhi princes.

² Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War* (Chap. III, p. 88).

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It was too late: no defence of any kind was possible, and then occurred that gallant deed by which Willoughby and eight other heroic Englishmen blew up the magazine in order to prevent its capture.¹

In the course of the day, Metcalfe House,² standing in beautiful grounds on the banks of the river about a mile from the city, was completely gutted, and its possessor flying in hourly peril of his life.

Not, however, before his little boy of four years old had been entrusted to the care of devoted native servants, and faithfully they fulfilled that trust. The child was disguised and smuggled to the coast, from whence he was dispatched by English friends to his father's relations in England —one of the many instances when native fidelity afforded succour in that dark hour.

Sir Theo himself, from a grim story told of him, provided another instance. While the insurgents were scouring the country for fresh victims, he was hidden in a cave by a friendly peasant, who, on the mutineers expressing their intention of exploring its recesses, solemnly warned them that it was inhabited by a big, red devil, who would assuredly rush out and cut off their heads.

They however persisted, one man, bolder than the rest, being considerably in advance, and there was nothing left for Metcalfe, a tall heavily built man, but to enact the part assigned to him!

A message from Agra, dispatched on the 14th, brought the stupefying news to Calcutta. There

¹ Four of the nine men amazingly escaped with their lives, and it was most tragic that Willoughby himself, one of the survivors, should have perished some days later as a fugitive.

² Not to be confused with another Metcalfe House, 11 miles from the city.

were at first divided opinions in Council as to the desirability of employing all available forces for the recovery of Delhi, and it is stated in Kaye and Malleson that John Low strongly supported Lord Canning in his determination to make the supreme effort.

That a strong British force, well supplied with artillery, should have remained supinely boxed up in Meerut, instead of pursuing the mutineers as they streamed towards Delhi, appeared inconceivable until it was realized that it was another instance of the *personal equation*, and that the old, feeble and inert general in command of the station was quite unable to cope with a sudden and appalling emergency.

John Low's thoughts must have flown back fifty-one years to the Mutiny of Vellore, when, after the revolt and murder of some of his brother officers, it had been disbanded by the swift action of Colonel Gillespie, who had come thundering from Arcot with a regiment of dragoons and two guns, and sternly and instantly suppressed a rising that would otherwise have set Southern India in a blaze.

His two elder sons were now both fighting, but it was only at rare intervals that any news of them could reach the parents. Robert's regiment had thrown in its lot with the rebels, after which he was attached to the Delhi Field Force.

No letters of his have survived, but he is mentioned more than once by a near relation and contemporary, Edward Talbot Thackeray,¹ his

¹ Sir Edward Talbot Thackeray, V.C., K.C.B., 1836-1927; second son of the Rev. Francis Thackeray and Mary Anne Shakespear.

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mother's double-first cousin, a young Bengal Engineer, who reached Calcutta in January of this year, and who kept up a regular correspondence with his relations in England. The latter was a tall, fine-looking lad, serious and reserved, known to his intimates in those days, so my father told me, as "the Silent Friend."

Writing to his half-aunt, Henrietta Shakespear, after the hard-fought action of Badli-ki-Serai, which freed the road to Delhi, he tells of some wonderful escapes that he had had, adding : "Who do you think I met in the middle of the fight on June the 8th, just after we had taken the heights ? Robert Low. He is Orderly Officer to General Barnard." He speaks too of Theophilus Metcalfe, who had now joined the fighting forces, and whose unequalled knowledge of the city was of great value when the day for the assault at last dawned. Edward Thackeray was a good correspondent, and his letters convey a vivid impression of the weary weeks of waiting on the Ridge. To that little army, at the same time besieged and besiegers, the arrival in August of John Nicholson and his column brought new life, and the stimulus of his strong personality was felt by all ranks.

Robert Low, who since Barnard's death had been on General Wilson's staff, was fortunate in being selected as Nicholson's A.D.C. in the action at Najafghar on the 25th, whereby the road was cleared of enemy for the long-expected arrival of the Ferozepore siege train, and, riding in advance, he was the first to bring the news of that brilliant victory into camp.

On September 11th, the cannonade opened, and

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two days later, the breaches were pronounced practicable.

Writing on the 25th from—*Headquarters, Engineer Brigade, City of Delhi*, Edward Thackeray sent his brother in England an account of the fateful days through which he had just passed. The Engineers were on duty three nights running :

... stumbling about all night in the long wet jungle, sometimes five feet high, wet through with the dew, & frequently attacked by the enemy. . . . Fifteen hundred camels were employed nightly in carrying down the fascines.

To the fighting men, British and native alike, the news of Nicholson's fatal wound early on the 14th brought consternation, but his work, both in counsel and in stern preparation, had been well done.

Without John Nicholson Delhi could not have fallen.¹

In that day's assault on the walled city all branches of the Service were represented, even the cavalry lending a hand.²

The native troops fighting for us far outnumbered our own, and a small body of Gurkhas, some of whom volunteered from hospital for the attack, especially distinguished themselves. Baird Smith's Engineer brigade was *ubiquitous*; young Sapper officers were attached to each of the attacking columns. For the heroic exploit of the blowing in of the Kashmir Gate by Lieutenants

¹ Sir John Lawrence, in his "Report on the Mutiny."

² Sir Hope Grant, in position under the walls of the city, covered the unprotected batteries with 200 men of the 9th Lancers, and 400 Sikh horsemen.

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Home and Salkeld and several non-commissioned officers, four Victoria Crosses were awarded.

That coveted decoration was won two days later by Edward Thackeray. Fighting within the walls of Delhi continued for several days, and it was not until the 20th that the Palace fell into our hands, when the majority of the mutineers fled from the city, unfortunately to pursue their activities elsewhere.

The magazine which Willoughby's gallant action had only succeeded in partially destroying, was taken by surprise on the 16th, whereby enormous stores of ordnance came into British possession, but a counter-attack resulted in the roof being set on fire.

We had to get up . . . with leather bags of water & put it out, while they threw large stones at us.

I think that day I had the narrowest escape of any. After putting out our part of the fire, I was jumping down, when three of them put their heads over the wall & took three deliberate shots at me, all of which missed.

They could not have been above ten yards off. I fired my revolver at one, but don't know whether I hit him or not. . . .

His report was instrumental in getting the V.C. for a young officer of Artillery, Lieutenant Rennie, who, with some ten-inch shells in his hands, climbed to the top of the magazine and dropped them on to the heads of the assailants, putting them to flight.

Thackeray's own participation in the affair was later brought to notice by Colonel Baird Smith and his own C.O., Colonel Maunsell, and resulted in his being presented with the Cross five years after at a general parade at Dover.

The news of the fall of Delhi reached Havelock as he was preparing to fight his way into Lucknow.

Too late to avert one of the most ghastly massacres in history, he had been fighting for months in the neighbourhood of Cawnpore, unable to advance to the relief of the sorely tried garrison until joined by Outram's column.

The defiant flag, flying from the roof of the Residency, still proclaimed British supremacy over all that remained to us of territory in the newly annexed province—some sixty acres, covered by surrounding buildings and entrenchments, which were connected by ditches and stockades.

Within that compound, since the month of June, 1,750 fighting men, and a very large number of non-combatants, including many English women and children, had been subjected to a daily bombardment at a range of 50 yards, and in addition were ravaged by every kind of disease.

The relieving army incurred much loss in the heavy fighting through the narrow tortuous streets, but on the 26th September they received a touching welcome from their beleaguered countrymen.

Outram, the “Bayard of India,” chivalrously refused, although senior in rank, to supersede Havelock until after the attack, but on the victorious entry of the troops he at once assumed command. It must have been a strange *homecoming* for the Chief Commissioner of Oudh. His wife,¹ in another part of India, had recently had to fly for her life, and the now-battered Residency,

¹ She had been at Aligarh, with her son (a young Civil Servant), and the native regiment stationed there mutinied in May, when she escaped to Agra.

within whose walls Henry Lawrence had met his death on July 2nd,¹ was crowded with women and children, sick and wounded—too many helpless beings to remove to safety with the forces at his command.

The net result had been to bring needed reinforcements—not relief, to the harassed and exhausted garrison, and insomuch that there were now more mouths to feed, surrounded as they were by a vast army, consisting largely of disciplined troops, the situation had become more precarious.

For nearly two months longer they held out, until on November 17th, Lucknow was again successfully stormed by British forces—an army of 4,500 men under the command of Sir Colin Campbell, the newly arrived Commander-in-Chief.

But Lucknow could not yet be held. The Residency was evacuated, and after heavy fighting, in which the garrison took part, the army fought its way back by the same route by which it had come. In camp, at the Dilkushar gardens, by the death of Havelock² it sustained another heavy loss. At sixty-two the resilience of youth is gone, and, fighting to the last, though long ailing, he succumbed to an attack of dysentery.

From Dilkushar, the army withdrew to the Alam Bagh,³ where Outram was left with a division to operate outside the city, while the

¹ It was on this day that the shell struck him while resting in his room: he died forty-eight hours later.

² The news that a grateful country had conferred a baronetcy and a pension of £1,000 a year on both Outram and Havelock, arrived too late for the latter. Both were, however, conferred upon his son.

³ Another royal garden, further from the city. Outram's main position was on the plain beyond.

Commander-in-Chief returned to Cawnpore to prosecute his campaign against Tantia Topi, taking with him all the sick and wounded, women and children, who were sent under convoy to safety at Allahabad.

Meanwhile, in Calcutta, the man on whose shoulders rested the most overwhelming load of responsibility, was new to his post, and lacking in the administrative genius and capacity for swift decision that distinguished his brilliant predecessor.

When the crisis came, the absence of Dalhousie's practised and steady grasp of the helm was deplored by all. But Canning was no weakling, he had great qualities, and in his single-hearted passion for justice, he was unsurpassed by any who had hitherto filled his great office. Too self-contained for popularity, too coolly intrepid to be capable of sympathy with any form of panic, he was at this moment the most-maligned man in Bengal.

Terrible and unexpected things had happened to the small white minority scattered throughout India, and the thirst for retribution, as often happens, as in inverse ratio to the proximity of danger. Reprisals, as was natural, had been fierce, but they had also, in some places, been *indiscriminate*.

Against any form of *race-hatred*, the Governor-General steadfastly set his face.

"Clemency Canning" he was called in scorn and derision. They little knew their man!

"Justice, and that as stern, as inflexible as law and might can make it, I will deal out,"¹ he

¹ Given in *Earl Canning*, by Sir H. S. Cunningham (Chap. VI, p. 125).

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wrote in a letter to Lord Granville towards the close of the year.

It was well for this country, and for India, that the Paramount Power should then have been represented by one who, having glimpsed the vision, could view with detachment the play of shadows within the cave.

"I don't care two straws for the abuse of the papers, British or Indian," he said in the same letter—"I am for ever wondering at myself for not doing so, but it really is the fact. Partly for want of time to care, partly because an enormous task is before me, and all other cares look small."

To his colleagues in Council the nobility of the man was apparent, and my grandfather, who viewed the situation from the same standpoint, felt for him a profound admiration and sympathy. During this year of almost daily intercourse, there was little need for correspondence, but amongst John Low's letters were a few notes from Government House, sent by hand. The following, written on October 13th, refers to my father :

DEAR GENERAL Low,

I send you these papers direct, on account of a statement in the last page but one of Mr. Muir's letter, which I am anxious should not come upon you or upon Mrs. Low by surprise.

I have marked it with a little red mark. There is nothing very alarming in it, & if the mail carts are as good as they are represented, we cannot be much longer without more information. . . .

Malcolm Low, who had passed out of Haileybury in December, 1855, was in the Bengal Civil Service, his first post having been that of Assistant Commissioner of Revenue at Meerut, but being on sick

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leave in the hills above Dehra Dun at the time of the outbreak, he had escaped the horrors of that day. On the news reaching him, he applied for cancellation of leave and from that time onwards was fighting more or less continually throughout the Mutiny. He was twice severely wounded, receiving on two occasions the thanks of the Indian Government.¹ In the country to the north and north-west of Delhi, anarchy prevailed. The Meerut Division and Rohilkand, like Oudh, were seething. In one station after another, throughout May and June, there had been a sickening repetition of mutiny, massacre and plunder. The Government chests, heaped with rupees (for most of the revenue had been collected), proved too great an incitement to the sepoys, and in the neighbourhood of Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur, some of the local chieftains, Mussulmans of hardy warrior stock, unreservedly threw in their lots with the enemies of the British Raj, their walled cities forming centres of disaffection for the bodies of Mutineers—largely irregular cavalry, roaming through the country on their way to and from Delhi.

In some parts, the temporary paralysis of a strong and impartial rule was the cause of yet another horror. Orgies of religious fanaticism, of which the Hindus were the helpless victims, broke out with murderous violence. The British forces were engaged in holding Delhi, and no large bodies of troops could at this time be spared.

¹ When his services, with those of other civilians, were brought to the notice of the Home Government in Lord Canning's dispatch of July 9th, 1859, he received a letter conveying the approbation of the Queen.

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The Civilians, at their various posts, had to do the best they could with the means at their command.

Amongst the names of men who did conspicuously well in this corner of India, are those of Alexander Shakespear,¹ Magistrate and Collector of Bijnaur, and Robert Spankie, holding the same post at Saharanpur, under whom, during this year, my father had the good fortune to serve.

Shakespear had a large amount in the treasury —£25,000 in silver, when news of the initial outbreak reached him, and Bijnaur, forty miles distant from Meerut, was overrun both by bandits and bodies of mutinous soldiery.

On May 21st the jail was broken open. He promptly had the money removed from the treasury and thrown into an adjoining well, where it was possible to guard it, by stationing a few men armed with muskets on the treasury roof, until a young officer, Lieutenant—afterwards Sir Hugh Gough, arrived from Meerut with a small escort to remove it. Writing years later, the latter paid a tribute to the work of the Indian Civil Service at this time :

Before starting I most earnestly begged Mr. Shakespear to return to Meerut with me, together with his wife & young Palmer, but nothing could induce this brave man to desert his post, nor would his wife leave him. Few people nowadays are aware of the marvellous devotion to duty, & self-sacrifice shown by the Civilian Officers in the days of the Mutiny. Many sacrificed themselves rather than for a moment desert their posts. . . .

¹ Alexander Shakespear, B.C.S., sixth child of Henry Davenport Shakespear.

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That sacrifice was demanded of Shakespear's brother-in-law, Mr. Mordaunt Ricketts,¹ Magistrate of Shahjahanpur. Both men had later placed their wives in safety and returned to duty.

"My line of conduct," wrote Ricketts to a friend, "appeared clearly marked—it was clearly my duty to rejoin when my leave was up," and in a later letter, after nights spent with other Civilians under arms, he wrote: "I cannot tell you how horrible the sensation is of hourly expecting to be massacred in cold blood."

The outlook subsequently appeared more hopeful, but on May 31st, before this letter reached its destination, the English church was attacked during service by the sepoys of the 28th Native Infantry, and Ricketts, already wounded within the building, was dispatched in the porch.

Malcolm Low, on cancellation of sick leave, was first employed in escorting Government treasure by elephant from Saharanpur to Mussourie, and then in the collection of revenue, for the performance of which duty he was sent an escort of Punjab Irregular Cavalry by his Chief, from whom he received the following letter. The bulk of the population was greatly to be pitied.

... I am highly pleased with what you do in the Khatu, & the discretion you exhibit. . . .

I must trust very much to your own judgment. I think that by soothing rather than by irritating, & at the same time keeping up a bold front, you will fulfill your task.

¹ Shakespear and Ricketts had married daughters of a former Judge at Mirzapur, Benjamin Taylor; another being the wife of Sir Hope Grant. The three sisters, Mrs. Shakespear with a baby at her breast, sailed together for home in March of the following year. The latter never recovered from the effect of her experiences.

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Only remember, there is no pledge against punishment for old misdeeds ; only consideration for repentance to be shown.

You are a good man, Sir,

R. SPANKIE.

Robert Spankie, who had the reputation of administering justice with the most scrupulous care, always insisted that the Courts instituted for the trial of mutineers should be attended by a Civil Officer. They were stern times. Not infrequently, the guilty men, sentenced to be blown from the mouths of guns, asked for the privilege of meeting death unbound, and with Oriental stoicism, placed themselves deliberately in position.

Among the Clatto papers, I came across a letter written by my father while recovering from the wounds to which Lord Canning's note referred. It is the only family letter of 1857 that has survived, and the accompanying memorandum which he wrote out for his parents, gives a typical picture of the conditions in that part of India at the time. Its contents were new to me. To his daughters he spoke rarely of the Mutiny years, of his experiences in the fighting line, never. Many of the memories were painful, he said, and an incident recounted in the memorandum evidently cut him to the heart.

To preserve British prestige and authority the only force then available consisted of small bodies of native troops—very scratch lots—officered by any Englishmen, military or otherwise, who were able to take the field. It was a campaign waged by young men, dashing and often singularly effective.

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The letter was written on October 28th, at
Mussourie.

MY DEAR FATHER,

. . . I have only received two letters in all from my mother since the outbreak, & I fear but few of my letters have ever reached you. After the taking of Delhi, I was obliged to be sent here on account of severe wounds, of which I am now nearly recovered, but the loss of the use of two or three fingers of the left hand will I fear be permanent, at least so say the doctors.¹ The cut was just above the wrist, severing all the tendons & cutting well into the bone.

However, I shall be able to hold my reins, & thank God it is the left hand.

I was sure that you & dear Mama would like to hear about all my doings, & have therefore put down in a Memorandum a little account of the rebellion at Moozuffurnugger.

It is an unvarnished statement of fact, & only intended for yourself. . . .

I return to Meerut, my old station on the 10th Nov. for good, & my health, so far from being worse, has been, I think improved by my active life during the rains.

It is indeed a great disappointment to have heard nothing of you for so long, but I know that either my mother or you must have written.

Dear Robert is well, & with Shower's column. He has indeed behaved nobly throughout, & poor Nicholson used to say he was the smartest officer on the staff.

With best love to dearest Mama & yourself,

I am always,

Your very aff^{te} son,

W. MALCOLM LOW.

The account commences with the 5th September, on which day he rode into Muzaffarnagar to confer with Mr. Edwards, the able and energetic

¹ The doctor's opinion was falsified. So clean were the wounds inflicted by these sword-cuts, that long after he was again in the saddle, splinters of bone found their way out without causing inflammation.

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Magistrate, who had been sent by Spankie to replace the former occupant of that post, whose health was reported to have broken down, and who—a rare instance—had behaved with arrant cowardice at the time of the first outbreak.¹

My father learnt from Edwards that he intended to march at once to the assistance of his colleague, Mr. Grant, who, repulsed in an attempt to capture a noted rebel from Delhi, of the name of Khyratee Khan, had fallen back on the small town of Shamli.

. . . I returned to Runkundie & wrote off an express to Mr. Spankie, desiring permission to assist Mr. Edwards should he send a requisition to me.

The next day at 5 o'clock I got the desired permission, —at 9 o'clock the requisition arrived.

In half an hour we were on the road. We made two long forced marches, & the next day at 3 p.m. we found ourselves at Shamlee via Moozuffernuggur.

Our force consisted of—

4th Troop, 1st Punjab Cavalry, 60 sabres, brought by me.

1st Troop, 1st Punjab Cavalry, 50 sabres with Mr. Edwards.

One Troop late 3rd Light Cavalry (very short), 30 do.

Mn. train { 1 three-pounder gun
1 twelve-pounder howitzer } manned by twelve Goorkas.

Goorkas, 100 men.

Total 240 men & two guns.

The moral effect of our little force was enormous. Revenue was paid in considerable sums & we thought that all would go well.

On the 11th, very early in the morning, we discovered that a village named Hurhur was actually—while our force was at Shamlee, levying a sort of blackmail upon all passengers, & murdering many unfortunates who could pay nothing.

¹ An account of his behaviour is given by Kaye.

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The village was attacked ; Lieutenant Cayler, of the Gurkhas, was in command, and the inhabitants, on seeing his sturdy company advancing, "deemed resistance useless," and the ringleaders were at once taken and put to death.

A little later as my father was sitting under a tree eating his breakfast, a man was brought up who earnestly desired to have speech with him. He turned out to be one of the Government Police, stationed at Thanah Bhowan, one of the small cities with which the country was studded, who had barely escaped with his life. The Chieftain, whose loyalty had long been suspect, was now in open revolt. Of him, my father writes :

The Khazi of Thanah Bhowan was a great & powerful man. His family had resided in that town for upwards of two centuries. His wealth was great, his influence enormous.

The memorandum continues :

He [the Khazi] is joined by numbers of people from Loharee & other towns, & assisted by a large body of the 15th Irregulars & 60th N. Infantry sent for Delhi.

He has turned out all the Government Police, few of whom have escaped with their lives. They have sworn to destroy the English Raj, & muster in all some 8,000 men. . .

We held a council of war & found we had only to consider these points.

(1) The enemy numbered 8,000, among whom were many disciplined soldiers, & 6 light field pieces.

(2) Our force numbered 250 disciplined men, on the majority of whom we could depend, & two light field pieces.

(3) On the open plain we felt ourselves able to make a good fight.

(4) But Thanah Bhowan is a walled city & they are inside preparing to defend it.

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Under these circumstances we felt it would be madness to attack it with our present force, & accordingly retreated to Shamlee, posting small piquets for one mile on all sides.

The next morning the alarm was sounded & every man was ready in 3 minutes, the two guns placed in position ready to fire in the direction of the impending danger,—port fires lighted & everything ready, but we were destined to be pleasantly disappointed by the sight of a "Sahib," followed by a fine troop of Afghan Horse, numbering 90 sabres.

It was Captain Smith, late 24th N.I., proceeding from Peshawar to Meerut with this troop & 50 Sikhs armed with tulwars.

On the urgent requisition of Mr. Edwards, he consented to stay & take command of our force.

An express was now sent to Meerut "for two H.A. guns and as many infantry as they could spare" for a later attack on Thanah Bhowan, and it was determined in the meantime to move in a southerly direction and reduce the forts of Bomhanch and Towlah, in the possession of Khyratee Khan.

They were delayed for three days by the illness of Lieutenant Cayler, starting on September 14th.

He most nobly requested to be left at Shamlee, we would not consent, most fortunate was it that we did not. . . . To garrison Shamlee during our absence we had wished to leave as strong a force as we could spare. This the Tehsildar [Revenue Official] would not hear of. He implored Mr. Edwards to leave only 1 duffardar & 10 troopers, declaring that he could with these & his 60 "burkundazes" [police] defend himself against any number of rebels.

He was an instance of a truly strict Mahomedan, & yet faithful to our Govt. We never saw him again.

At daybreak they were within 3 miles of Bomhanch, the fort of which was occupied by Khyratee

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Khan, when there occurred a surprise attack from another direction.

Drums were heard & crowds of armed men were seen streaming out of Towlah. . . .

Captain Smith immediately halted the column. I was then bringing up the rear guard; I galloped up to him for orders. He said that my troop was with the baggage & ought to remain, but on my pointing out that my men would be far more serviceable than those of the late 3rd Light Cavalry, he consented to send them to the rear & directed me to charge the enemy on the right flank, while he took the left with the Afghan Horse.

We charged accordingly, & a fine sight it was; the rebel infantry stood, but almost all their cavalry bolted. The result was that they were thoroughly beaten & dispersed, that upwards of 100 dead bodies were left on the field, while we lost but 9 killed & wounded, 2 horses killed & 7 wounded.

Completely dispirited the rebels then betook themselves to their city, but the infantry were now well up & the place was, after considerable resistance, carried at the point of the bayonet, the cavalry outside cutting up numbers who endeavoured to escape.

All the great men of the town were captured & hung. . . . Altogether it was a fearful lesson to the rebels in that part of the country & most beneficial in its results.

We had now been 18 hours in the saddle (the whole of the infantry were in hackeries) & the men were almost worn out. The sun was cruelly hot. Nevertheless we saw the immediate necessity of occupying the town of Bomhanch, so the advance was sounded & away we went.

Finally we sat down before it at 2.30 p.m. Telescopes were applied & armed men were plainly discernible running along the ramparts of the fort.

We did not know what the feelings of the townspeople might be; under these circumstances I volunteered to ride up & see if I could not speak to some of the head men.

Taking with me two troopers, I rode right in, & met with profound salaams, but unequivocal looks of mistrust. At last I got one to come forward.

He said that Khyratee Khan is now, or was now in the

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fort,—“ But who, O Sahib, can stand before your invincible (illegible) ? He is now escaping on the other side.” . . .

This statement proved to be correct.

We trotted the guns up to the large gates of the fort, the infantry entering at the double. Four discharges blew them open, & we rushed in to find only the baggage & cooking utensils ; they had every one of them escaped to the other side of the town.

As there could be no doubt that the city might have given information to our force, Mr. Edwards at once laid on it an enormous fine.

We then proceeded to establish some of our troops in the fort, & to encamp the rest on the plain outside ; we had now been in the saddle 21 hours without anything to eat, having marched in that time 27 miles. . . . I slept that night as I had never slept before. Khyratee Khan, I believe has since been taken & hung at Meerut ; when he fled, the hopes of the rebels fled with him. . . . The people saw that the British Lion was roused & vigilant, & the rebellion of Southern Moozuffernuggur was at an end.

They were now, however, the recipients of bad news from their base.

Flying rumours came in that all had not gone well at Shamlee ; worse & worse they came in, until the sad reality was laid before us. It appeared that as soon as the Thanah Bhowan rebels got news of our march to the south, they detached a large force of 3,000 men with two guns.

The Tehsildar was wholly unprepared for this. Nevertheless he immediately determined upon a vigorous resistance. Calling the whole of his little force within the walls, he barricaded the gates & declared he would never surrender.

The gates were, however, soon blown in, and the attackers surged into the building.

Our little force gallantly kept them at bay for some time, & having done all that brave men can do, died

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fighting sword in hand against overwhelming numbers : no quarter was given, & out of the 2 Tehsildars, 11 troopers & 60 police, but one trooper, frightfully wounded, & some few police lived to tell the tale.¹

A more horrible tragedy than the massacre at Shamlee will, I believe, hardly be found in the annals of this great rebellion.

On the 18th, Captain Smith marched upon Shamli, hoping to give battle in the open, but the Khazi's men, their work done, had withdrawn to Thanah Bhowan, and as reinforcements from Meerut—consisting of two guns brought by Lieutenant Fraser, H.A., and a company of Sikhs under Lieutenant Johnstone—had arrived, it was now determined to attack that city.

They reached the place at 8 a.m. on the 19th, when Lieutenant Fraser, on a large party of the enemy being seen within 500 yards of the walls, galloped up the guns and gave them some discharges of shell and 4 round shots, which caused a very hasty retreat.

But the attacking force was too small, and was attempting the impossible ; the narrative continues :

The town was walled & was loopholed for musketry. The gates were large, heavy & closed ; the town could only be attacked on the one side, as the trees were so dense that artillery was perfectly useless.

Add to this that the trees on the remaining side, tho' not so dense, were so close to the walls as to render the bringing up of the guns a matter of impossibility. After

¹ In Kaye and Malleson it is stated that fire was set to the building, and that the massacre took place after the Tehsildar had accepted honourable terms of capitulation, but my father on his return to Shamli, must have had the account direct from the survivors.

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throwing in shells for an hour Capt. Smith sounded the advance in skirmishing order.

Now altho' I am not a military man, I cannot help expressing my opinion that this was a great mistake. We could never see more than a few heads of the rebel artillerymen above the walls, & our men were killed in the most pitiable manner by the discharge of musketry from the loopholes.

My troop had now been told off as escort to the H.A. guns. I shall not forget the first curious sensation of having round shot whistling over my head ; presently I heard a sort of cracking noise, & looking round saw that a three-pounder shot had buried itself in one of my trooper's horses, entering at the chest.

We were now in fact under a sharp cannonade, & the first shot over, I found myself perfectly cool, & I fear very indifferent to the horrid wounds I saw.

The casualties at this time became very heavy ; the skirmishers had lost over twenty killed and wounded, Lieutenant Johnstone was carried to the rear with a severe wound, and my father's horse staggered, receiving a bullet in the neck, while a second one buried itself in the saddle.

The order was now given to storm, & the storming party under Lt. Cayler immediately advanced & succeeded in taking possession of the two largest guns, but alas our infantry, at first only 200 men was now too fearfully thinned.¹ . . .

Smith was obliged to come to the conclusion that it would be madness to continue . . . & told Fraser & myself to retreat & form up at 500 yards to the rear.

Just as the last word was out of his mouth, I saw him throw up his hands. I rushed up just in time to save him from falling & saw that his right arm was shattered. Holding him on with difficulty we got him into a doolie, & Fraser took command.

¹ In Kaye and Malleson's account it is said : " The affair was over if only they had been supported."

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It was now decided to retreat upon Muzaffarnagar.

After marching some 4 miles, we were attacked by a body of 1,500 men, horse & foot, partly from Thanah Bhowan, & partly from Loharee.

They were charged by the cavalry in three small bodies. My troop was on the extreme right. The result was exactly as might have been expected. The rebels were broken & dispersed, & my party pursued up to the very walls of Loharee ; the behaviour of my men was splendid, & tho' I had now only forty, yet sixty dead bodies were counted on the ground over which they had charged.

The rebels lost upwards of 150 men, many of whom I am glad to say were men of power & influence. . . .

We had been now 20 hours in the saddle & my men's horses were thoroughly done, but my dear old Arab (bought in Calcutta with the money my father gave me for the purpose) was still fresh & in wind, in spite of the bullet that he got at Thanah Bhowan ; the consequence was that when I found myself at Loharee, not one of my men was up with me.

I was pursuing a man whom I was certain was an Irregular, & did not wish to let him escape, & could not restrain myself from following him right into Loharee. At last, driven to bay, he prepared for resistance, & a most determined one he made. Before I could touch him he had cut my reins & my situation was truly critical as I could not wheel about my horse, but the noble animal, tho' now wounded by two sabre cuts (one on the head & the other on the shoulder), stood firm as a rock & let me fight off his back as if I had been sitting in a chair.

But to make a long story short, I received 3 severe wounds, one through the ear, almost dividing it, & one on the left arm into the bone, & the last & least one on the left thigh, before I succeeded in cutting him down.

Meanwhile my men appeared, some wounded, some dismounted, but all determined to find me. . . .

I now slowly & with some difficulty rejoined the force, my wounds were seen to & I was put into Mr. Edwards' buggy.

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The news of the capture of Delhi now spread far and wide, and fresh bodies of British troops were available. Thanah Bhowan was once more stormed and this time successfully, but my father was now "out of it," and Mr. Spankie reported :

Both Mr. Low & Mr. Melville [another young Civilian who led the 2nd detachment of Punjab Cavalry] were present at the attack. . . .

The former, I regret to say, was severely wounded. I ordered him in, though he wished to join the force now preparing to go to Thanah Bhowan.

The reinforcement which made possible the eventual capture of this city, consisted in one of the most remarkable corps of volunteers ever raised. The nucleus consisted of nine Sikh horsemen (of the 1st Oudh Cavalry), who refused to take part in the murder of their officers, and rode unarmed into Mirath,¹ to proffer their services to Mr. Dunlop, the Magistrate of that district.

A call for further volunteers was responded to by Englishmen, Eurasians and natives, the two former—young men in various kinds of civil employ—predominating.

Few of those [wrote Dunlop] who so gallantly volunteered for a life of peril & adventure . . . had any military experience to assist them, . . . but they possessed the hereditary courage of their race; they could all ride; many of them were sportsmen, some of them were crack shots & admirable swordsmen.²

This extraordinarily mobile force performed prodigies of valour. It was called the Khákí

¹ They had previously surrendered their arms to the Magistrate of Aligarh.

² Kaye and Malleson. (The corps was commanded by British *military* officers.)

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Risála from the name of the dust-coloured cloth chosen for uniform !

Malcolm Low's subsequent activities during the Mutiny are mentioned in various papers and reports, but the only other letter of his that has been preserved of this time, makes no mention of personal experiences.

In March, 1858, he was selected by Canning to accompany the Rurki Field Force under Brig.-General Jones into Rohilkand, taking part in all the actions which culminated in the capture of Bareilly, after which he was deputed as Civil Officer with the body of Cavalry which opened communications with Sir Colin Campbell on the north side of the town.

For two years he was under canvas, and for a considerable time messed with the 42nd Royal Highlanders. On one occasion, he told me, he was much impressed at seeing (and hearing) a number of privates and non-commissioned officers engaged in earnest prayer before going into action. There was one company that had not a word of English !

In May, while acting as Joint-Magistrate of Pilibhit, a sub-division of Bareilly, he was attached to a column commanded by Captain (afterwards General Sir Samuel) Brown, and took part in heavy fighting in the actions at Nuriah and Sirpurah on the 29th and 31st August.

The enemy, defeated at Nuriah, fell back on Sirpurah, a ruined village separated from it by a tract of inundated country.

Years later, Sir Samuel Brown ("Sam Brun Sahib" was the name by which he was known in Indian days) said in a letter to my father in reference to this action :

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. . . It was to you that I was indebted for the information of the country & for the guides, & you contributed materially to our success in the affair.

The route taken by the guides—consisting of an old woman and a boy—brought them out at dawn on a neck of dry land to the rear of the enemy's camp, and the surprise attack of this small body of native troops without artillery, was completely successful. The enemy had four guns in position, and seeing the terrible effect which one of them—firing with grape at fifty yards—was having on his cavalry, Brown at once charged and engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with the gunners, in which his arm was almost severed by a stroke of a tulwar, and Malcolm Low, who was in the charge, recounted that his life was only saved through the presence of Dr. Maxwell, of the 2nd Punjab Cavalry, who had kept close at their heels, and who promptly applied a tourniquet.¹

Brown, who was for long at death's door, was awarded the Victoria Cross for this action, which was quoted as being one of the most successful during the Mutiny. He had engaged an enemy numbering 3,000 with three companies of Infantry and a squadron of his own regiment.

¹ An account given in a letter to *The Times*. Brown's obituary notice had credited my father with the application of the tourniquet, and with having cut down the individual sowar who had severed that officer's arm. He disclaimed the former action and stated that he was not conscious of having performed the latter.

CHAPTER XVII

*Final Capture of Lucknow and the Oudh Proclamation,
1858*

OME months before this action took place, John Low had bidden a final farewell to India, but not before the news of the capture of Lucknow, for which the whole country had been anxiously waiting, reached Calcutta.

At the beginning of the year Lord Canning moved to Allahabad in order to be within nearer distance of the main army, and there, after long and anxious thought, he penned the Oudh Proclamation which gave rise to so much controversy.

Many causes contributed to make that country the heart and soul of the great rebellion in addition to the impetus from the sepoy revolt which had spread like a prairie fire through the north-west provinces.

Dalhousie had foreseen possible dangers in the temporary dislocation consequent on annexation, and had recommended a partial disarmament of the swarming population, a recommendation which was, however, pigeon-holed.

Numerous soldiers, formerly in the pay of the King of Oudh, had been disbanded without re-absorption by the Government, involving real hardship and loss of status to the men. There were minor causes of discontent, and unfortunately the man selected at a critical stage to fill Outram's

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place while he was fighting in Persia, was more taken up with ignoble squabbles than his grave responsibilities.

Above all, vested interests were at stake—every great landowner and petty chieftain saw his rapacity curbed and his powers restricted under a new and unwelcome régime.

The proclamation had therefore to be addressed, not only to a mutinous army, but to an entire province in revolt.

To John Low, the Governor-General sent on February 5th a letter covering eight double sheets of paper, detailing the conclusions to which he had come before drafting the terms, which, epitomized, declared the whole proprietary rights in the soil of Oudh confiscate, but promised to all who made immediate submission (with the exception of those whose hands were “stained with English blood, murderously shed”) their lives and honour, and further holding out hopes of restitution of former rights to such as were prompt in supporting the Government in the restoration of order.¹ It proved to be a bit of wise statesmanship, but it was not so regarded at the time.

Outram wished for the offer of more lenient terms, and in another matter, namely, the time chosen for the publication of the proclamation, Canning's views ran counter to general opinion. His independence of mind and unstinted acceptance of responsibility are nowhere more clearly shown than in this letter. With a sullen, determined and unbroken foe he would not treat.

¹ This tentative promise was inserted at the instance of Outram.

FINAL CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW

CAMP, ALLAHABAD, Feb. 15th, 1858.

. . . It has been a question of great nicety & difficulty whether to put out a Proclamation offering terms to those who are in arms in Oude at once, or to wait until the work at Lucknow has been done.

The C.-in-Chief leaned throughout very strongly to the first course. Sir James Outram is decidedly in favour of it & of liberal offers of pardon. Sir John Lawrence writes to me recommending somewhat of an amnesty, & seemingly thinks the time is come.

I have determined not to take any steps of the kind until the C. in C. has crushed, or is in possession of Lucknow. As regards the Talobkdars [landowners]—I am disposed to be very indulgent.

But to proclaim this indulgence before attacking the city would be very liable to misinterpretation, & as many of the Chiefs are slipping away of their own accord, the gain of doing so would not be great.

The letter continues by enumerating the difficulties of issuing a manifesto to a mutinous army in the field. It might appear easy on paper to offer their lives to all sepoys excepting those belonging to the guilty regiments, which had murdered their officers. In practice it was almost impossible; regimental books and officers acquainted with them were altogether wanting, and moreover on the publication of such a declaration the most guilty would at once take to the jungles.

There would remain literally none upon whom justice could be executed. . . .

The Proclamation must give complete condonation to all but the proscribed class if it is to be of any effect at all, & for this I am not prepared. . . .

We could not go on punishing the men of Rohilkand, Central India & other parts if we let the men of Oude, whose mutiny & whose hostility have been much more determined than the others escape scot free.

For these reasons I think it advisable to abstain from all manifestos or offers of pardon at present, whether

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to the Talookdars & their levies who have eaten our salt, or to the more heinous offenders, who are mutineers & traitors as well as rebels.

For three months Outram, with an army of four thousand men, had been holding his position at the Alam Bagh, against an enemy numbering 120,000, but at this time the combined armies under Campbell were converging on Lucknow, and Canning was called upon to decide another important question.

The British forces contained, for once, a predominance of English regiments, but we had a faithful and valuable native ally in the field. Jung Bahadur, Prime Minister and virtual ruler of Nepal, had recently visited Europe, and when the crucial moment came, he unhesitatingly threw in his lot with the defenders of the British Raj. He had brought in person 10,000 of his gallant little hillmen, unaccustomed to the hot plains of India, and Colonel George Macgregor (he who had been with Sale at Jalalabad) was attached to the Gurkha contingent with the rank of Brigadier-General.

The letter continues :

... I am sorry to say that within the last 48 hours a necessity for delay has arisen. . . . Jung Bahadur and General Frank will not be up till the 27th. . . .

The reasons for going on are obvious & strong, but I think that those in favour of pausing are stronger. They are two-fold. Jung Bahadur is bent upon having his share in the chief work—that at Lucknow. He does not dream of being left out of the fray.

He speaks of it to Macgregor as his one object. If we stole a march upon him & settled affairs without letting him in for a share in them, I firmly believe we should have an explosion.

At first (just before I left Calcutta) he let fall some

FINAL CAPTURE OF LUCKNOW

expressions which looked as if he contemplated going back to Nepaul as soon as the weather became hot. I told Macgregor to sound him & the result reported to me is that he is determined not to go home until Lucknow falls, & that he made a general appeal to his officers . . . to which they responded, heartily concurring.

As we are mainly responsible for his not being further on the road (for want of carriage), I feel that he would have a very real grievance . . . if we jockeyed him out of his share in the campaign.

A second reason is that there is a strong movement of rebels from Oude (above Cawnpore). . . .

Sir Colin has sent Brig. Walpole & Col. Maxwell (88th) to look after them.

I think it very likely that this may grow into a larger affair . . . & that delay in advancing to Lucknow may not be lost time after all.

It is only fair to him (the C. in C.) to say that he assures me that he is able to take the strong positions of the city with his own force alone, although he expects that the loss will be much less if the other two divisions are awaited. . . .

After a careful consideration I have answered in favour of waiting.

The third Clatto boy had just reached India, and the letter concludes :

Your son has been announced by Edmonstone, as I am writing, & I have lost no time in seeing him. He looks so fresh & happy & English as to be almost out of place amongst the dried-up careworn faces that daily present themselves. He is delighted to hear that he is sure to be in time for Lucknow.

I am going to give him a bad dinner, which is all I have to offer.

It must have been a curious experience for this lad to meet his *seasoned* brother Robert in what remained of the building in which the latter had first seen the light, and which for so many years had been the home of his family.

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The Residency, after days of heavy fighting, fell finally into British possession on March 16th.

Edward Thackeray, who was with the Engineers, under Napier,¹ describes in one of his letters the taking of the Martinière and the Begum Kothi.

On the 9th we assaulted & took the Martinière with very little loss. Lang, Forbes & myself were told off for the assault. We each had a party of sappers. . . .

We drew up in rear of the Dilkusha. My party went with the 42nd Highlanders. At the word, off we set at double quick time across the space between the Dilkusha & the Martinière.

The Highlanders presented such a solid appearance & made such a row that I believe that alone frightened away the brutes.

Anyhow we took it without losing a man. . . .

On the 11th we had battered & breached the Begum's house with sixty-eight pounders. It was assaulted & carried, & about six hundred of the enemy killed inside.

It was in this assault that Captain Hodson,² the finest Irregular Cavalry officer in India lost his life.

In the evening after the fighting was over he visited the Begum's³ house :

. . . Such a sight it was. Imagine a splendid house & gardens with lamps all over it, with enormous rooms, & mirrors & chandeliers, & Highlanders lying about in all directions, & dead sepoys everywhere . . .

This time, as much as possible, street fighting was avoided.

¹ Robert Cornelis Napier—1810-90, Bengal Engineers. Afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala.

² Hodson was not killed in the assault, but later, in some fighting in the dark recesses of the palace. The fates were kind—a soldier's death, rounding off a gallant life. For there were blots on the escutcheon!

³ The Begum Kothi was adjacent to the Kaisar Bagh, the latest of the royal palaces, built by Wajid Ali Shah.

THE OUDH PROCLAMATION

Fancy getting into a house in Park Lane, only twice the size, with gardens & courtyards, & knocking a hole in the next with sixty-eight pounders, then bringing up the guns & knocking a hole in the next & rushing in & so on.

The rebels did not understand it ; they had prepared the streets with batteries & loopholes, etc., while we . . . broke through from house to house.

With Lucknow once more in British hands, Lord Canning's proclamation was issued, but the satisfaction of the army at the capture of the city was marred by the fact that the Commander-in-Chief made no attempt to pursue the fugitive enemy. That redoubtable lady, the Begum of Oudh,¹ and the greater number of the rebels escaped to the "terrai" of Oudh and Rohilkand, which necessitated the long and costly guerilla warfare of the ensuing years.

The Gurkha regiments had acquitted themselves well in the fighting, and now prepared to start for their own country. A passage in a letter from Lord Canning to John Low on April 6th, alludes to a farewell visit to his camp paid by the fiery leader of the Contingent.

I have Jung Bahadur on my hands here for another day. He is alarmingly excitable, & I can quite well understand that Gen. Macgregor has had a difficult time of it, but all has gone quite smoothly with his Highness as yet.

These little men of the hills, with their gallantry

¹ The Begum was one of the *mota* wives of Wajid Ali Shah. Her son had been proclaimed "Viceroy of Oudh" by the rebels, with herself as Regent. Although not so valiant as the Rani of Jhansi, who was killed in the field, she had sallied forth on her elephant and taken part in at least one action.

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and good humour, have long been proverbially friendly with our Highland regiments.

The manner of their homeward progress on this occasion, irresistibly recalls Fhairshon's raid on the "Clan McTavish" !

Sir Hope Grant¹ describes the difficulties of the "European Officer" (General Macgregor) in marching through a country filled with rebels, owing to the fact that of the existing force of some 8,000 men, only 2,000 were available for fighting purposes. Two thousand were sick, and the remainder were requisitioned, at the ratio of one man per cart, to guard the 4,000 carts, containing their tents, *private property and loot* !

This letter of April 6th was one of farewell to my grandfather, and reached him as he was embarking for home :

MY DEAR GENERAL Low,

I earnestly wish that I could transport myself to Alipore for an hour to wish you a hearty farewell in person, & to talk over once more the troubles which we have shared together, before you turn your back on them for good.

But I must content myself with these words on paper ; perhaps we may fight our battles over again by a fire-side & without a punkah.

I have been greatly grieved to hear of your having been such an invalid during your last few weeks in India . . . I have heard that you think of breaking your voyage to England by a halt at Malta, a wise precaution I think with the not very genial air of Fife in prospect.

It would give me great pleasure to have a line from you there.

Matters go more slowly here than I could wish. . . . I understand that the Proclamation is thought too severe. My belief is that it will not be found so, & that the

¹ Malleson, Vol. 4, p. 348.

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leniency which it will be just & wise to extend to all who can be construed as in any way worthy of it, will be all the more effective for not being trumpeted in the Proclamation itself.

The declaration which General Outram wished to put forth would have been nothing short of a capitulation to every recusant Talookdar. . . .

Farewell, my dear General Low. I hope that the remembrance of our relations will be a source of as unmixed pleasure to you as to me. At all events be assured that I shall never think of our past intercourse but with the sincerest feelings of respect & regard for yourself.

Pray give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Low, & believe me,

Most sincerely Yours,
CANNING.

The embarkation was only just in time. There were on this occasion no relations present to bid John and Augusta Low an affectionate farewell. The sons were at their posts, John Shakespear had retired from India in 1852, and Richmond was far distant from Calcutta. He had been appointed Resident at Baroda, but when the ferment of the Mutiny spread to Rajputana, he wrote to my grandfather asking him to sound Lord Canning as to whether he could be more usefully employed in that country, and offering to serve in *any capacity* under George Lawrence, who had succeeded his brother Henry as Governor-General's Agent at Mount Abu, on the latter's transference to Lucknow. The Gaekwar of Baroda, with whom Richmond had at once established the most friendly relations, was a young man, who had only recently succeeded to the throne, and Canning, while transmitting his appreciation for the "handsome offer," did not accept it, writing :

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It is of great importance to keep the Gaekwar's Government right in these uncertain times, & in no way is that so likely to be secured as by keeping you where you are.

The wisdom at this juncture of not changing the man in control, was soon demonstrated, for early in November an attack on both the Baroda Treasury and the Residency was frustrated, which, if successful, would have set all Gujarat ablaze.

Further responsibilities were not long in coming. In December he was given, temporarily, the command of the Northern Division of the Bombay Army, at the same time being made Political Commissioner for Gujarat, thus uniting the civil and military control of the country. When it became necessary to disarm the population of the British territories, adjacent to, and interlocking with those of the Gaekwar, a difficult and critical situation arose.

It was essential not to force the issue, for our forces in Rajputana were dependent on Gujarat for supplies, but every person of note in Baroda not only carried arms, but maintained armed retainers. In January, Richmond was able to submit to Lord Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay, a scheme for the disarmament of Baroda as well as of the British districts under his control, based on proposals put forward by the two Ministers of the Gaekwar, which was successfully carried into effect. In the following May, at a crucial moment, for news had come that the warrior Rani of Jhansi had seized Gwalior, he received from Elphinstone a very doubtful addition to his strength, i.e. the remnants of the 27th Native Infantry, purged (by execution, transportation and discharge) of all its guilty elements,

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which had, incidentally, included all but one of its native officers. There were eleven lacs of rupees in the Treasury, a terrible temptation to men in no happy frame of mind.

Richmond handled the situation characteristic-ally ; he reviewed the regiment and addressed the men, complimenting them on their proved loyalty, and in proof of his confidence, sent them to Ahmadabad, a march of over 100 miles, in charge of the Treasure, receiving subsequently a letter from the Commander-in-Chief :

It will be gratifying to you to know that the self-respect has, through you, been restored to the corps . . . by the generosity & boldness, tempered with much discretion, which induced you to send them among their comrades, escorting a large amount of treasure to their new station.

The regiment was restored to duty under the designation of the 31st Native Infantry.

Baroda remained loyal, in spite of a determined dash in that direction by Tantia Topi in December, 1858, and on relinquishing his military command in the following year, he received the acknowledgments of Sir Hugh Rose " for the perfectly successful way in which all your operations have been conducted."

Malta was reached by John Low some two months after leaving Calcutta—too late for a meeting with Lord Dalhousie, who, with his daughter, had been spending some time in the island, and who, he was grieved to learn, in conver-sation with the captain of the vessel which had carried them on both the outward and the return voyage, had landed at Southampton in worse health than when he started,

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Lord Ellenborough, under Lord Derby's administration, had now, for the fourth time, taken office as President of the Board of Control, and on reception of a copy of the Oudh Proclamation, he penned a dispatch for transmission by the Secret Committee¹ to Lord Canning, so insolent in tone, and so lacking in any sense of responsibility, that, emanating from such a source, even to-day its composition seems almost incredible.

A born orator, his self-confident impetuosity, added to the prestige of his long connection with India, swept the Cabinet, but it was with dismay that his colleagues beheld the unauthorized publication of his dispatch in *The Times*, weeks before it could reach India.

In the opening paragraph, which presents a fantastic distortion of historical perspective—at a time when his countrymen were fighting in India for their existence, he permitted himself to pass judgment upon a past act of policy, which had been fully endorsed by the Home Government, and against which he had himself uttered no protest.

We must admit that, under the circumstances, the hostilities which have been carried on in Oudh, have rather the character of legitimate warfare than of rebellion, & that the people of Oudh should rather be regarded with indulgent consideration than made the objects of a penalty exceeding in extent & in severity almost any

¹ The Secret Committee comprised only a small section of the Court of Directors. Debarred from consultation with their colleagues, they were obliged, by the procedure of the time, to transmit, without alteration, but under their own signature, any communication which the Parliamentary Board of Control (whose powers were vested in the President) wished to have conveyed to the Indian Government.

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which has been recorded in history upon a subdued nation.

It was therefore with consternation that John Low scanned the English newspapers on arrival, before sitting down to reply to Lord Canning's farewell letter.

MALTA, June 19th, 1858.

MY DEAR LORD CANNING,

It is no exaggeration to say that I can scarcely find words to express to your Lordship how deeply I feel gratified by your flattering & most kind letter of the 6th April from Allahabad.

It has indeed proved to be a *permanent* source of gratification both to Mrs. Low & to myself . . . it reached me at a time when . . . I had just reached my very hot cabin on board the Bengal steamer in bad spirits & so weak from illness that I, literally speaking, could not walk three paces without assistance. . . .

You will readily suppose that I read in the public newspapers of the treatment which you received from Lord Ellenborough with feelings of disgust & indignation ; it was some consolation to find that his unjust & cruel conduct towards your Lordship, & his unpardonable indiscretion as a public man, deprived him of his office, . . . but the mischief done by the publication of some parts of that letter to the Secret Committee may be most serious both now & in future times ; my own belief however is that there will not be much *immediate* bad effects produced in the minds & the acts of the nations of India . . . & that your Lordship's general measures for the restoration of good order will not be rendered to any serious degree more difficult than they were before.

I cling therefore to the hope that you have *not* resigned your Office, especially as Lord Derby acted so justly & promptly . . . by sending a telegram to overtake the despatch, & as the Court of Directors followed that measure so well up by their letter & resolution of the 18th May. . . .

I shall be very anxious however till we get, as I hope

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we shall in another fortnight or three weeks, positive intelligence that your Lordship has resolved to remain at your post. . . .

Mrs. Low joins me in kindest remembrances to Lady Canning & your Lordship, & I am, my dear Lord Canning, with feelings of the highest respect,

Yours most faithfully & sincerely,

J. Low.

He need not have feared ; it was a case of—" the man recovered of the bite " *et seq.* Canning's calm and dignified reply fully vindicated his policy, and in the following April he received the thanks of both Houses for his services during the Mutiny, while Ellenborough's dispatch, having become a subject of debate in the Commons, roused so much indignation as to jeopardize the continued existence of the Government, and led him to proffer his resignation.

It was only by a narrow margin that my grandfather's career ended, as it had begun, in the service of John Company. In August of this year the bill was passed by which the Government of India was transferred to the Crown ; on November 1st the Queen's Proclamation, translated into the many languages and dialects of India, was read, with the appropriate ceremonial, throughout the length and breadth of the land, and the peculiarly human touch conveyed in its wording, due to the direct influence of the Queen herself, made an immediate appeal to the peoples of India.

The Mutiny was not yet wholly ended, but the turning point had been reached in June when the victories in Gwalior crowned the successes of Sir Hugh Rose's¹ brilliant campaign in Central India ;

¹ Sir Hugh Henry Rose—(1808-85), afterwards Field-Marshal first Baron Strathnairn.

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sporadic fighting continued until the capture of Tantia Topi in April of the following year, and the guerilla warfare in the jungles of the Upper Provinces took even longer to extinguish, dying out, as it had commenced, in fitful and angry gusts.

One later letter from Lord Canning was preserved among John Low's papers—on a subject very near his heart. It was written at a time when the policy of the Government towards the Native States of India was undergoing a considerable change. No longer were their rulers to live in continual dread of the eventual absorption of their princely Houses into British India; on the other hand, the Paramount Power reserved to itself the right of interference in cases of real necessity, and was no longer to stand impotently by while whole populations were subjected to gross tyranny and oppression. In the light of after events the letter seems strangely prophetic, but the writer would have been surprised indeed had he learnt that the great powers which he envisaged as foes, would act as our allies in the coming struggle.

CALCUTTA, Aug. 15th, 1860.

... Your opinion of the Adoption Question is most satisfactory to me. I was not able to put into a despatch, which might have been made public, *all* the reasons that conduce to the policy which I have recommended, but I trust that those which are urged will suffice.

The truth is that as strong a reason as can be furnished, is the chance of an European war.

I look upon that contingency as one which will try our strength in India far more than any internal condition which is likely to arise for many years to come.

A war in which France & Russia should be against us would bring on internal convulsions of the most perilous kind, unless we set our house in order while there is yet

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time. And the surest way of doing this is so to treat our native fellow subjects & the native Princes as to give them no inducement to intrigue against us, to convince them that they have nothing to gain, but much to lose by any change in the Paramount Power in India, & so to bring them into that temper in which, when the danger comes, we may safely throw the reins on their necks, & trust to their maintaining their fidelity with a minimum of support from an English army.

When the day of danger comes, our English armies will have enough to do outside of India. . . .

CHAPTER XVIII

Home. The Closing Years, 1858-80

MY grandfather had now reached the allotted span of man's life and his working days were over. The two great men under whom he last had served, died untimely, worn out by incessant strain and labour ; for him there remained a stretch of twenty-one years before he answered the universal call.

Dalhousie survived his return by nearly five years, tragic years, during which, racked with anxiety at the news from India and bearing in stoic silence many virulent and unjust attacks upon his past administration, he moved from place to place in search of health, until immobilized by increasing feebleness.

But he died in his own country, and I like to think that John Low must have had opportunity of again speaking with him before that winter day in 1860, when his body was borne to the burial ground of his fathers in the parish of Cockpen.

Canning, too, left India a broken-hearted and dying man. The death, at Calcutta, of his brilliantly gifted wife, from malarial fever, was a blow from which he never recovered, and he passed away in June 1862, only two months after setting foot on his native shore.

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“ What—so soon ? ”, he exclaimed, when the doctor’s verdict was broken to him by his sister, and calmly proceeded to make the necessary preparations.

For a considerable time John Low was able to spend the summer and autumn months at his beloved Clatto, surrounded by relations and friends. The winters were either spent in London or abroad, the rigours of the Fife climate being too great after a lifetime spent in the East.

Before his return, General Bethune had passed away, and John Mill died a year later. The five old sisters, four widows and one spinster, all established themselves in Edinburgh, and the duration of their yearly visits to their old home was to be measured by *months*, not weeks.

They were a long-lived family ; Georgina died comparatively young, at sixty-six, from a recurrence of her former malady, cancer, and Susan Foulis’s death took place in her seventy-third year, but Charlotte Mill lived to be seventy-six, Catherine Deas eighty-seven, and Maria Bethune ninety-two.

Catherine remained in old age as in youth, the centre of her foreground. For many years she affected a heavy black wig, which she suddenly discarded, emerging as a beautiful old lady with silvery hair. On one of her visits, a young man staying at Clatto picked up a miniature which had been done of her at the age of eighteen exclaiming in heart-felt tones : “ *What a lovely girl !* ” and was somewhat surprised at hearing an old voice pipe from the depths of an arm-chair “ *It’s me.* ”

She remained perfectly impervious to the prose



CLATTO: Front View



CLATTO: View from the Garden

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lytizing efforts of her sister Susan, and one afternoon in Edinburgh, after enduring a lengthy dissertation on the subject of certain *good books*, remarked in an audible aside to a young relative as Lady Foulis sailed from the room: "And now go out and bring me a *wicked novel*, my dear!"

To the end of her life she continued to "enjoy bad health," and after being condemned to complete inactivity, received her visitors sitting up in bed, surrounded by floral offerings. From this point of vantage she several times demanded her favourite brother's attendance at her death-bed, but on his arrival invariably recovered.

On one occasion she surpassed herself, but he was not then at Clatto. Having announced to her granddaughter and her husband—both of whom stood in considerable awe of her—that she would die on a certain day, she insisted on their laying in material for mourning, and even on having the coffin ordered.

Her commands were obeyed, but the sickle-bearer was not thus to be stampeded. *Nothing* happened, except that the old lady gave way to furious temper, and remained unapproachable for several days after.

Susan Foulis, like her sister,¹ survived both her sons in India. The life of her youngest was completely dominated by her; she chose for him not only his profession, but his wife! In a life of single-hearted devotion to religious activities, she must have been a helper of many, but unfortunately her missionary fervour found vent *in season and out of season*. In 1860 my father

¹ They both died in Madras, the eldest in 1853, the second in 1855.

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came home on sick leave (receiving, it appears from an India Office communication found amongst his papers, a wound gratuity amounting to the curious sum of £317 1s. 11d.), and did not return to India until 1863, when he was blessed—or the contrary—with an extremely fussy Chief-Commissioner, eternally avid of information as to the doings of his subordinates.

One sweltering day he received the usual demand from head-quarters for a report; the same mail brought a bulky letter from his “Aunt Foulis,” which, when unfolded, was found to contain a tract of considerable length.

It opened with the following remarkable lines :

“ O tell me, Brother,—Brother, say,
What’s the news ? What’s the news ? ”

“ O tell them I’ve begun to pray,
That’s the news,—that’s the news.”

Without further perusal he seized and thrust the pamphlet into an envelope, which he addressed to his Chief—without comment ! The result, as might be expected, was thunderous in the extreme, and ample apology was exacted and *extracted* under pain of entire cancellation of leave !

In these later days the kirk and manse of Kemback were no longer the meeting ground for the surrounding gentry.

A different type of clergy ministered in the small country parishes, and moreover many of the Scotch lairds had taken to the Episcopal form of worship. The Clatto pew at Kemback had usually some occupant, but my grandfather had grown, in India, to prefer the rubric of the English church, and generally drove with his wife to St

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Andrews behind a very stout pair of horses, for on Sundays the heavy carriage had the additional weight of the dickey, in which, except when little Charlie Metcalfe was home from the holidays to keep her company, the English ladies' maid was invariably perched in solitary grandeur.

William Low, on the contrary, remained faithful to the church of his childhood, and from Cairnie Lodge attended service in the parish church at Cupar, of which he was an Elder. The two brothers were greatly attached to one another, and there was a constant "va et vient" between the two houses. Like the rest of his family, William was long-lived. He died at his last home, Kinniesburn, St. Andrews (whither he had moved when his nephew, Robert Foulis, went to live at Cairnie after the deaths of his brothers), in 1873 in his eighty-third year.

The obituary notice in the local paper gives a vivid impression of his personality :

Frank, warm-hearted & genial in disposition, his manner exhibited a happy combination of the bluntness of the sailor with the manly bearing of the soldier.

Incidentally his brief career in the Navy had terminated at the age of sixteen, when he had sailed as a cadet to India !

An ardent lover of country sports, his appearance was ever welcome alike on the golfing green & the curling pond. The memories of Tarvit pond are specially associated with his powerful arm & hilarious voice, & many are the incidents of battle on its glassy surface which his name will recall to the older members of the Cupar Club.

His second wife, who also predeceased him, was a great favourite with the Clatto family.

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She was very affectionate, but excessively gentle and timid—quite a different type to Margaret Hunter. There was one son of the marriage, a feckless, unsatisfactory creature, and a bonnie, sonsie daughter, whose youthful “*joie de vivre*” and extreme popularity with the other sex were rather a source of anxiety to her aged parent, who was more embarrassed than pleased when she tripped down to breakfast and bawled into his deaf ears : “*Another proposal, Papa.*”

My youngest aunt, her contemporary, who was herself lacking in good looks and whose only charm consisted in a refreshing sense of humour, often spoke to me with affection of this cousin, whose pre-matrimonial flutters were a constant source of interest to the family, and who was much missed when she departed from Fife, having married a man with a fine property in Ireland.¹

On one occasion her father, who was lacking in the core of steel possessed by his elder brother, dispatched an SOS to Clatto. The latest “affair,” which had apparently commenced on a coaching expedition, led to suspicions as to the gentleman’s antecedents, and, in fact, my grandfather’s stern inquiries elucidated the information that the gentleman was already provided with a wife and family ! On reception of the news, the young lady took to her bed, and word went forth that she was suffering from congestion of the lungs, but the old aunts in Edinburgh, shaking

¹ His name was Wise. He died a few years later, and as she had no children she lost her jointure on a second, and not very happy marriage to a clergyman, who appears to have been both unpleasant and impecunious.

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their heads in conclave, opined that it was not necessary to have indulged in so dangerous an illness.

Between Augusta Low and her eldest grandson there was great affection, and he used often to speak of her to me. Like all her family she was fond of both pen and paint-brush, writing verses and little stories for her daughters, and drawing plants and flowers with the exquisite detail common to her generation.

By her husband, whose side she had never left during the long years in India, she had always been regarded as the first object for care and consideration, and if in the dining-room at Clatto, conversation became heated, or took a turn not quite to her liking, a plaintive voice would be uplifted at the foot of the table—"I must *not* be agitated," and instant calm supervened.

It was a hospitable house to which all members of her family were welcome. Emily Dick lived out a long widowhood at Cheltenham, and the eldest brother—for so many years a member of the Lucknow household, married in the year following his retirement, and settled at Hastings. He had no children, and was a most kind uncle to his numerous nephews and nieces; it was generally held in the family that some of the traits in Colonel Newcome's character were drawn from him. Augusta's other much-loved brother never came to Clatto; the brief home-leave accorded to him in 1841 was the only one that he enjoyed in his eventful career.

He died at Indore of acute bronchitis in October, 1861, having been for over two years Governor-General's Agent in Central India, and

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just as he was about to take up the more important appointment of Resident at Mysore.

Long ailing, it had been impossible to induce him to take the prolonged rest which he urgently required. His years of service had brought him, as it had John Low, into sympathetic contact with many of the native races of India.

Shortly before his death he received from Lord Canning a letter asking for his views as to the desirability of offering Scindia's Minister a seat on the Viceroy's Legislative Council.

I have not in any part of Asia met with a man better suited for the office than Dinkar Rao,¹

was the reply, and he added :

There is not, in my opinion, a sounder measure than the employment of natives of high character in our Council Room.

Thackeray, in his paper—*On Lett's Diary*—extracts from which have been already given in these pages—recounts how two announcements concerning the cousins who in boyhood had been to him as brothers, first met his eye :

And now, brethren, may I conclude this discourse with an extract out of that great diary, the newspaper?

I read it but yesterday, & it has mingled with all my thoughts since then.

Here are the two paragraphs, which appear following each other :

“ Mr. R. (Ritchie), the Advocate-General of Calcutta,

¹ Dinkar Rao held the appointment with distinction for many years. In 1866, he was made a K.C.S.I., and the title of Rajah, with remainder to his descendants, was later conferred on him.

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has been appointed to the post of Legislative Member of the Council of the Governor-General."

"Sir R. S., Agent to the Governor-General for Central India, died on the 29th of October of bronchitis."

These two men, whose different fates are recorded . . . were sister's sons. In one of the stories by the present writer, a man is described tottering "up the steps of the ghaut," having just parted with his child, whom he is despatching to England from India.

I wrote this, remembering in long, long distant days, such a ghaut, or river stair at Calcutta; & a day when, down those steps to a boat which was in waiting, came two children, whose mothers remained on the shore.

One of these ladies was never to see her boy more, & he too, is just dead in India. . . .

We were first cousins; had been little playmates & friends from the time of our birth; & the first house in London to which I was taken was that of our aunt, the mother of His Honour the Member of Council.

His Honour was even then a gentleman of the long robe, being in truth a baby in arms. . . .

"For thirty-two years [the paper says] Sir Richmond Shakespear faithfully & devotedly served the Government of India. . . ."

"In his military capacity he saw much service, was present in eight general engagements, & was badly wounded in the last.

"In 1840, when a young lieutenant, he had the rare good fortune to be the means of rescuing from almost hopeless slavery 416 subjects of the Emperor of Russia; & but two years later, greatly contributed to the happy recovery of our prisoners from a similar fate in Cabul."

. . . I write his name in my little book, among those of others dearly loved, who too have been summoned hence. . . . And Fort William guns are saluting in one man's honour, while the troops are firing the last volley over the grave of the brave, the gentle, the faithful Christian soldier.

For William Ritchie the summons was not long delayed; he died six months after his cousin—in Calcutta.

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His mother, the last survivor of that generation of Thackerays, had passed away four years before Augusta Low's return from India, but her daughter—another Charlotte Ritchie—remained on in Paris, having at one time charge of her brother William's children, and my grandparents, on their visits to that city, delighted in this family circle. Of William Thackeray, when wintering in London, they saw much until his death in the winter of 1863, and I possess a letter from him to my father, asking him to drop in to dinner, but telling him not to trouble to write, with a postscript: "By the way, I think you don't!"

To Thackeray's two daughters, the elder of whom was her goddaughter, Augusta Low was deeply attached. When editing her mother's letters, Hester Ritchie (Mrs. Fuller) asked me if there were any early ones of hers in our possession, but it was not until the break-up of the family home that I came across a packet, labelled by my grandmother—"Letters from Anny Thackeray," which contained seven.

One of them refers to a recent visit to Clatto, another is adorned with a rough sketch of a seal-skin coat, trimmed with beaver, purchased with a cheque sent by her correspondent, which is described as being a great bargain at the price of £9 10s.! All include messages to "dear Sir John," with whom she was a great favourite, and all are redolent of her charm. Characteristically, too, they are all undated! There was a *timelessness* about her in all things. In her old age, as the widow of Sir Richmond Ritchie, I myself had the happiness of spending some quiet hours alone

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with her at Freshwater—hours which remain a treasured memory.

A year or so before her death, she asked me to bring a little nephew, aged six, to tea at “The Porch,” but he besought me so earnestly *not* to accompany him, that I made my excuses and left him at the door. Afterwards I learnt that they enjoyed themselves *immensely*. The war was then in progress and he regaled her with tales of deeds of prowess—fantasia all—but presented in the light of solemn fact, and received with the same delight with which they were imparted. And I realized that I should have been too old for that enchanted intercourse.

Of the many personages who figure in the family letters, the only one with whom I came into any real contact was Selina Shakespear, who never married and who lived until 1908: her upright carriage, snowy hair and delicate pink and white complexion I can vividly recall. In the course of a “genealogical” correspondence with my father in 1895, she wrote :

You ask after me. I think I am considered a wonderful person. I get a good many compliments as so like an old picture, so you see I can quite go in for my place as a *picturesque ancestor*!

A bit of fun—isn’t it? And life would be weary if one did not try to be young in oneself, even at 75!

In spite of chronic bronchitis, the earlier years spent in retirement must have been happy ones for my grandfather. St. Andrews provided much pleasant social intercourse, and until extreme old age he played golf with ardour, being accorded by the “Royal and Ancient” the unique privilege of

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pursuing his ball on a shaggy pony, dismounting for each stroke.

His four sons, the eldest of whom had for him a peculiarly strong affection, came home from time to time on long leave, and his son-in-law was ever a welcome guest at Clatto. Although his health had been permanently impaired through hardships endured in the Mutiny, Sir Theo Metcalfe possessed a happy, genial temperament. He was a great society man, and, it must be added, extremely extravagant.

Charlotte's name never passed her father's lips, but her memory was enshrined in his heart ; although he had a great affection for all his children, his younger daughters never in any degree filled their sister's place.

When his young grandson left Harrow for Oxford, a family conclave was held in the dining-room to discuss the question of his future career. Charlie Metcalfe was an engaging youth, with the most buoyant spirits, who all his life was an indefatigable squire of dames, and his father suggested—only half in jest—that he might do very well without a profession, and that with luck he might manage to pick up an heiress !

At this, the frail old man at the head of the table—now in the mid-eighties—rose slowly to his feet, and said sternly : “ *My daughter's son shall not be an idler.*”

Charles Metcalfe had subsequently a fruitful career as a railway engineer in South Africa. While at Oxford he formed a friendship with Cecil Rhodes, with whom his life was thereafter closely associated, and whom he helped to nurse in his last illness, being one of the

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two or three personal friends present at the simple and impressive ceremony in the Matoppo Hills.

Like his friend, he remained a life-long bachelor, but his father presented him with a stepmother when he was twenty-three years old, to whom he became greatly attached.¹

With his grandmother he was undoubtedly on a very privileged footing from a story told me by my mother of her first visit to Clatto as a bride, at which time he was a lad of nineteen. He was a remarkable mimic, and on the day in question, placed himself in turn in every one of the chairs set out in readiness for the majestic entry of the household staff to morning prayers, indicating the posture and facial expression of each future occupant.

They entered, they sat, and they conformed with such exactitude that she suffered the excruciating tortures known to such as vainly struggle against paroxysms of ill-timed mirth !

The last years of John Low's life brought increasing weakness of the chest, but his mental powers remained keen to the last.

There must have been sadness in outliving all the contemporaries of his service days. His honours came late. One who loved him wrote of him after his death :

... Indeed his disposition was so modest that he never could endure to allow even his friends to bring forward his merits & unrewarded services.

It was not until 1862 that he was made a K.C.B., on which occasion he received the following from

¹ Katherine, daughter of James Demster, of Dunnichen, Angus—a handsome stately woman, and a considerable heiress.

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a very old friend, but one who was fifteen years his junior. What albums crammed with Victorian photos the postscript recalls !

NICE, 13th Nov^r, 1862.

MY DEAR SIR JOHN,

It is with the most sincere pleasure that I am at last enabled to address you by your proper title, seeing by *The Times* just received that you are gazetted as K.C.B.; my only regret is that it is not G.C.B., & that it has been so long in coming.

We had hoped that you might possibly come here, where we have a delightful climate, but I suppose you have determined on wintering in Paris.

With our united love,

Ever affectly Yours,
J. OUTRAM.

I send a photograph which I have just had done; my wife would not have hers done, some difficulty about the cap.

Sir James Outram died in the following year.

In December, 1873, when he was in his eighty-fifth year, his long-past services were again acknowledged by his being gazetted as K.C.S.I., and in a letter from Sir John Kaye, the historian, it appears that he returned to London from abroad for the investiture.

The latter, whose letters were penned from what he describes as "my Alpine summits" at the India Office, was a constant correspondent, and in a postscript to a letter of April 28th, 1874, he recalls the occasion of their first meeting :

My kindest regards to Lady Low, to whom I send a little anecdote which may amuse her. It is dear to me as recalling the first time I ever saw you—forty year agone.

I think it was in the cold weather of 1833-34, that two young cadets of Artillery, recently arrived, were

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helping to get rid of their letters-of-credit at Pittar & Latteys in Tank Square, Calcutta, when a fine-looking English gentleman, scarcely yet of middle age, entered (in plain clothes) to make some purchases.

Attracted by the fresh looks of the Griffins, he said to them :

“ Well, young gentlemen, what are you buying ? ”

Upon which one of them, whose juvenile dignity was hurt, answered :

“ What’s that to you ? We shall not ask you to pay.”

The gentleman laughed, & having given his orders, left the shop, when Mr. Pittar asked :

“ Do you know whom you were speaking to ? ”

“ Not at all.”

“ That was Major Low, Resident at Lucknow.”

The silent youngster then said to his more loquacious friend in fun :

“ You will catch it. You will be reported to Lord William.”

The loquacious Griffin is now Surveyor-General of India, one of the best officers & best fellows in the Service, the other is now Sir John Kaye, Political Secretary to the India Office.

Kaye was at this time in bad health and spirits, and appears to have regarded the future with gloomy eyes :

How very few of the old school are left to us. I have now before me a letter from the Indian Foreign Secretary beginning :

“ Can nothing be done to improve the Indian Political Service ? There is a terrible lack of men of mark.”

Terrible ! But I am afraid that nothing can be done to bring back the old days of Malcolm, Elphinstone, & Metcalfe, John Low, George Clerk, Henry Lawrence, etc. No one who goes out to India now cares a straw about the country or the people.

It is probable that not sufficient allowance was made for changing conditions. With the consolidation of British power, and enormously

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increased facilities of communication, the scope for individual initiative was necessarily restricted. And there had always been a converse side to the picture! Kaye's last letter ends on a sad note, more especially as penned by one to whose protracted and laborious labours posterity owes much.

Oct. 14th, /74.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

But for a long, & at one time dangerous illness, you should have heard from me ere this to enquire after you. . . .

I am now writing in bed, making use of my first little access of strength to hold brief commune with you.

I have been obliged to send in my resignation to the India Office. I leave it with much regret—a poorer man than when I entered it—poor & in debt, with nothing to look forward to but God's mercy & the Eternal Rest. With kindest regards to Lady Low,

I am most affect^{ly} Yours,
J. W. KAYE.

For a few years longer my grandfather continued to spend the summer months in Scotland, till the time came when he could no longer mount his shaggy pony, or climb to Clatto Hill behind the house to watch the changing glories of the sunset sky. Beautiful too, by daylight, that wide panorama, with the twin Lomonds to the west, and to the north, across the Eden estuary and Firth of Tay, the blue line of the Forfar hills, backed by the distant Grampians.

The last two years were spent at Norwood, with his wife and their devoted younger daughter, who rarely left her parents' side. Her sister led an independent life and was seldom at home. Affectionate and kind-hearted, she was too self-opinionated, tactless and impetuous to be a har-

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monious element in the house ; moreover, after spending some years with her brothers in India, she came *converted* after the manner of "Aunt Foulis," by which time an eleventh commandment had been added to the Decalogue. Never could she be induced to pass a decanter at table !

Hospital nurses were not employed, or even available, at that time as they are to-day, and night after night my youngest aunt sat up with her father through long hours of breathlessness and suffering, rewarded by his grateful recognition of her care.

He died on January 10th, 1880—a month after his ninety-first birthday, and his body was brought to Fife and buried in the family enclosure at Kemback.

Augusta Low lived a very withdrawn kind of life in her widowhood. Clatto was usually let. One summer, however, during our annual visit to St. Andrews she was there. My father was fishing in the Lews, but my mother drove out with her two small daughters to spend the afternoon. To this day I do not know if my impressions of my grandmother's appearance date from this visit, or are mainly coloured by pictures and photographs with which we were familiar. The human interest does not predominate in childhood. Some large transparent marbles with coloured spiral centres on a circular board we were given to play with, the ecstasy of being presented with this treasure on departure, the vivid hues and pungent scent of French marigolds on the terrace—above all, the peculiar charm of a long spring-board on trestles, upholstered in horsehair, discovered in the upper corridor (it had vanished when I next

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saw Clatto, and must have been in former use as a substitute for riding exercise)—these are the only indelible impressions registered by memory of that day.

For some years she lived on at Torquay with her faithful daughter, both much immersed in church activities, and they did not come north again. She liked to be kept informed of the welfare of her grandchildren, and sent them handsome tips at Christmas, but expressed no desire to see them.

And in August, 1893, for her too came journey's end.

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